
IMPRIMATUR

Liber cui Titulus [The Faith
and Practice of a Church of
England-Man.]

H. Maurice
Rmo in Christo P.
D. Wilhelmo Archiep.
Cant. à Sacris.

Junii 6.
1688.

IMPRIMATUR

Liber cui Titulus [The Faith
and Practice of a Church of
England-Man.]

H. Maurice
Rmo in Christo P.
D. Wilhelmo Archiep.
Cant. à Sacris.

Junii 6.
1688.

THE
FAITH
AND
Practice
OF A
CHURCH
OF
England-Man.

The Third Edition.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at
the *Bishop's Head* in *St. Paul's*
Church-Yard, 1688.

1111

1111

1111

1111

4.

THE
CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

OF the Church, Page 1.

CHAP. II.

Of Christian Belief, 21.

CHAP. III.

Of Gospel Obedience, 45.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Service of God in Publick, 67.

[A 3] CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of Additions to the Faith, 111

CHAP. VI.

Of Civil Conversation, 135

CHAP. VII.

An earnest Perswasive to continue in the Church of England, 175

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the CHURCH.

S AINT PETER, 1 Pet. 3. 15.
*Bids us to sanctifie the Lord
 God in our hearts, and to be
 ready always to give an an-
 swer to every one that asketh us a
 reason of the hope that is in us, with
 meekness and fear. And therefore it
 can never be improper, or unseason-
 able for the most private Man to
 give an account of Himself, of his
 Belief, and Practice, especially in a
 time when Religion is so much con-
 troverted; that he may be corrected
 by others, If he be in any mistake,
 (which I call God to witness, in my
 Case, is not wilful) or, if he be in*

the right, that he may at least by this example, do some good in the World, and provoke others to an Imitation.

I do therefore freely own, that I am not only a Christian at large, who Believes Christ to be come, and the Gospel to be the Word of God, and Rule of Men, and content my self with a silent Belief of This: But I look on my self as a Member of his Church, his Body, being admitted into it by Baptism, and enjoying singular priviledges and advantages by it, as having a right to all the benefits which he purchased to his Church, and a share in all the Prayers that are made for it. This Church or generality of Christians hath several parts, some of which are more pure, some more corrupt; yet all that hold the essentials of Religion, I esteem to be of it. And tho' it be spread over the whole World, yet I look on it but as *One*, Christ himself

self speaking of his Church but as *one*, and accordingly I profess it in my *Creed*. And I think it ought to be but *one*; for the several parts of it ought not only to believe the same Articles of Faith, but as far as is possible to maintain the same Government, and keep up the same outward Order and Administration of affairs: That so whosoever sees them, may know them to be the same kind of men, tho' scatter'd into several Countries. And they ought to keep up Union not only with one another, but especially with the First and Purest Ages of Christianity. For the Unity of the Church seems to require that we should endeavour as much to keep up Unity with the First Christians, tho' we live so long after them in time, as if we had lived at the same time with them, but far distant from them as to place. And all the Members of the Catholick or Universal Church ought to be more *one*;

to have a better agreement among themselves, a closer correspondence and connexion, and a greater concern one for another, than the *Mahometans* have one for another, who profess the same Religion; or than the Philosophers of the same Sect have, who hold the same Opinions.

And for my part I do what I can to keep up the Unity of it, by professing Christ openly with *this Church*, which is so pure a part or member of it.

And indeed, next to the sending of our Saviour into the world, I reckon my self bound for ever to thank God, that by his All-wise, and over-ruling Providence, he was pleased to order me to be Born in *England*, and to be Baptized there, and admitted into that part of his Church, which is there by Law established, and which I do verily believe to be in all particulars, the Truest, and most Sincere part of the Catholick Church on earth.

Now

Now by the Church of *England*, I understand that Body of Men, who, as to Church-affairs, are United together, under the same principal Church Officers, the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; and Communicate with them, and with one another, in all Religious Offices, according to the Liturgy, and Orders of our Church, profess the Christian Faith according to the Ancient Creeds, and the Thirty Nine Articles, and are governed according to the Canons and Laws of this Church.

And this Church, thus Framed, and Governed, (as far as I can judge) I find to be very consonant to the Scriptures, and in all material Points to be exactly correspondent to the Primitive Church, in its greatest Purity, *viz.* under and presently after the Apostles.

For it hath not only a subordination of Officers, which is necessary in all Regular Governments. what.

whatsoever; But it hath the same Officers, Bishops, and Priests, both in Name, and Authority, which seem spoken of in Scripture, which this Church always had, and all Churches that I can read of, ever had till of late, and the Church-Government that best agrees with a Monarchy in the State.

And whatever other men do, I esteem it not a light matter, what Church-Government is among us, if it were only for this, that this Church-Government hath been so universally received by all that own themselves Christians, from all Antiquity; I may justly think there was some necessity of such an Institution at first, and fear varying from such an Order, as not being able to discern perhaps all the ill Consequences of altering it.

But I find also that all other Nations, and particularly our own, were Converted under this Ministration. That this is the way by which

which so many good men have gone to Heaven; the Principal of the Martyrs of the ancient Church, as well as of our own, having been its Bishops. And by the going but in the way that so many good men have gone, I may hope sooner to meet Christ, than in a by-way of my own Invention.

And I find also this Church not only to be govern'd by the same Governours, by which the ancient Church was governed, but also to have the same general Laws, and to execute the same kind of Orders (onely where the Times will not give leave, or where there is a just Power in our Church to change, or good Reason to vary) and to be the same way consistent with Monarchy, and subservient to it, and to the Peace of the State by it. Besides, that it is the best way, according to Humane Prudence, to keep out Heresie, or Schism, and preserve Union

Union between the Members of the same Profession.

And lastly, I admire this Government, and Institution, because under it I am in no doubt of the Validity of the Ordinations of our Ministers, or of the Validity of the Sacraments by them administred. For we have our Orders by a continued Succession from the Ancients, and so from the Apostles, which is the only ordinary way, that I know of, for a man to be Commissionated to act in Christ's Name.

And therefore, for one of our Nation, and Born within the Pale of our Church, to separate himself from us, either from dislike of Episcopacy, or on pretence of greater Purity, I must needs think to be a very dangerous practice. For I no more doubt there is such a sin as *Schism*, than I doubt there is such a sin as *Murder*.

Further

Further, I cannot but admire at the want of Understanding (to say no worse) of those men who have endeavoured of late Years to run down Episcopacy in general, as Popish, seeing it is very evident, that Episcopacy was from the very beginning of Christianity, and many Ages before Popery, as by it are meant the Errours of the Church of *Rome*. And if it must be called Popish, because the Papists have such as they call Bishops; for the same Reason a Man may call the Creed Popish, because the Papists use, and profess it; And a man may call all the Greek and other numerous Eastern Christian Churches Popish, though in so many Points of Doctrine they are so contrary to the Church of *Rome*; But they agree with us in every considerable Point of Doctrine, as well as in Episcopal Government; And this by a continued Succession from the first Ages, which is also another very strong Argu-

Argument on our side.

Indeed it is so far from being true, that Episcopacy is a Branch, or a note of Popery, that I look on Episcopal Government, as the best way to keep out Popery, or any other Error. For Episcopacy, as Established in its Just Rights, and Power, utterly destroys the Papal Pretences; For this will bring the Bishop of *Rome* to his former state, when he was look'd on as no way differing from other Bishops, but only as he was Bishop of a bigger City, and had a larger Diocess. And the *Pope's* Creatures were so aware of this, that in the Council of *Trent*, when the *Spanish* Bishops would have Enacted Episcopacy to be of Divine Right, the *Italians*, the *Pope's* Creatures, presently smelt out the Consequences of it, viz. That This would be to depress the *Pope* himself to the same Level with other Bishops, and therefore made all the Interest they could

could that That Vote should not pass, and accordingly it was cast out. And therefore I must look on the Pope as a greater Enemy to Episcopacy, than even Presbytery itself. For Master *Calvin* himself did approve of Episcopacy; onely it could not so well be brought into *Geneva*, where there was a Popish Bishop living, who was Lord of that City. But the Pope will allow of no Bishops, in proper speaking, but onely himself; all Bishops deriving their Power from Him, He being the Head, and Root of Episcopal Power, as *Cajetan* hath determined; And all Bishops acting onely with his Leave, and by his Authority, and Grace, swearing Obedience, and Homage to Him, as they do by the Oath which they must take when they are Consecrated; All this makes them onely the Pope's Servants, and scarcely so good as his Deputies; To be sure they are not properly Bishops in the true,
and

and ancient sense of it, as such who, under Christ, had over their Presbyters, and People, Supreme Power, as to Church-Affairs, and Accountable only to Christ, and to a Council of their fellow-Bishops, often Meeting, and Consulting together for the good of the whole.

And as Bishops in general are not Popish, so neither can our Bishops appointed and consecrated according to the Orders of the Church of *England*, be with any colour accused of Popery. For at their Ordination first, and Consecration afterwards, they all subscribe to the *XXXIX. Articles*, to the use of the *Liturgy*, take the Oaths of *Allegiance*, and *Supremacy*, and give all the Caution, and security, that one Man can give to another, of their Aversion to Popery, and steddiness to the Church of *England*: And now besides this, They take the *Test*, and Renounce *Transubstantiation*, and the other great Points of Popery, and

and particularly disclaim all subjection to the Pope, or dependance on him, and this with abundance of Truth and Reason.

For if Christian Religion had been planted here from *Rome*, it doth not prove that we ought on that Account for ever to depend on *Rome*, or our Bishops be subject to the Pope. For we can prove that *Scotland*, some parts of *Germany*, and other places, received their Christianity from *England*; And yet they will not allow us to challenge power over those places upon that account still in Spirituals. But it is evident that we did not so much as receive our Religion from any of the Bishops of *Rome*, but had it planted here, either by the Apostles, or Apostolical men, as is fully made out, especially of late by those great and learned Members of our Church, Archbishop *Usher*, the Bishop of *St. Asaph*, and Dean of *St. Pauls*.

Indeed

Indeed when Christianity was almost destroyed in the Eastern parts of this Island by the *Saxons*, who were Heathens, the Bishop of *Rome* sent *Augustin* to Convert some of those *Saxons*; but he found many Bishops in this Countrey, who altogether disowned any dependance on *Rome*; and would pay no Obedience to the Pope, professing they owed no more service to him, than to any other good Bishop, and pious Christian. And moreover we in *England*, may justly plead the privilege of the Kingdom of *Cyprus*, according to the Council of *Ephesus*, of being a distinct National Church, without Dependance on any other.

And as thus in point of *Right* we can justifie our not being subject to *Rome*, so also in point of *Fact*, we can say, the Pope never had any settled, and quiet Possession, and exercise of Power here; at least for any considerable time together, as
is

is at large evident from what Master *Prynn* and others have collected; and all our Statutes of *Provisor's*, and *Pramunire's* do shew how little hold here the Pope was by our Government allowed, or own'd to have. And tho' many did appeal to *Rome*, it was against Law; and therefore, That gives the Pope no more Right here, than many peoples being Traiterous, and paying Homage to an Usurper, doth annul the Right and Title of the Lawful Prince.

If the Pope ever had any Power here, it could not be by a Divine, but a Humane Constitution, by the Approbation of the King and Nation; and that very Power hath for good reasons annulled this Liberty, and revoked this Grant, and made it High Treason, or at least a *Pramunire*, to have any thing to do with the Pope, or See of *Rome*. And what ever Reasons there ever could be for holding a friendly Cor-
respon-

respondence with the Bishop of *Rome*, I am sure there were and are as good, or greater Reasons for denying it now, and forbidding all Appeals to *Rome*; not only by reason of the vast summs of Money drawn out of the Nation, (all great Ecclesiastical Causes being judged at a Foreign Tribunal, and all Ecclesiastical Persons made to depend on another Jurisdiction,) But also we having found by woful experience how great an enemy the Pope was to our Peace, all Transactions with him were and are by our Laws most justly forbidden.

And therefore we being thus a Legally Constituted National Church, had consequently full power to Reform our selves, without asking the Bishop of *Rome's* leave. (When we found many Errors by degrees crept in among us) Nor can we with any shew of Reason, or Conscience, be charged with Schism on that account; for we
are

are ready to justifie to the World (as we have done it abundantly) that we have only cast off Errors, or such things as ought to be rejected, and have retained, or received, nothing but what is Necessary, or Lawful. And it is a hard case that we must be forc'd to ask the Pope's leave for us to grow better Christians; and it is yet a harder case if he should be unwilling, and not suffer us so to be.

And One particular National Church cannot, without great Impropriety, be so much as charged with Schism, from another National Church, such as that at *Rome* is, but from the Universal Church.---- So that it is a kind of Non-sense for us even to be charged with being Schismatics from *Rome*, unless *Rome* be all the World, or a Particular be an Universal.

Ours is the National Religion;
And for the first Ten Years of
Queen *Elizabeth*, the Papists did
Com-

Communicate with us, till the Bull of Pope *Pius* the Fourth, *An.* 15⁶⁹₇₀. though our Reformation was then fully settled. So that *They* are bound to answer it, why they joyn not still in Communion with us. And I hold my self bound to Obey this Church in all its Lawful Commands, it having as much Power, as any other Church in the World, over its own Members, though it is less imperious in its Commands, and pretends not to a Dominion over our Faith.

And therefore most highly do I Honour, and Revere This Church, thus Apostolically Govern'd, and Legally Establish'd, and of all things in this World dread its Censures. For I cannot but reckon that those great Priviledges, and Promises granted by Christ to his Church, *Matt.* 18. must belong to This Church, which is so truly Christian. And I am so far from slighting or despising its Authority, because
it

it doth not so imperiously Curse its Enemies, or doth not pretend to inflict Temporal Punishments on Delinquents, that I revere it the more on this very account. For God will be never the less severe against a Rebellious Son, because the Father did only with Pity and Tenderneſs rebuke him, and deſire to reclaim him. And it hath been of old obſerved, that where, and when the Church had leſs ſecular aid, there God did in a more ſpecial manner vindicate it himſelf.

As to the other ſubordinate parts of our Government under the Biſhops, ſuch as Arch Deacons, Deans and Chapters, and the ſeveral Eccleſiaſtical Courts, I think none can deny, but either theſe very Orders, or ſomewhat like them is neceſſary to the good of the whole, and the regular Adminiſtration of affairs under the Biſhop; and theſe very Orders have been

so long among us that they can plead the Prescription of so very many hundred years, and are so interwoven with our Laws, and the frame of our Government, and we have been so long used to them, that they have every way a firm, and settled Right among us; and nothing in this Life can be stable, nor right certain, if, to other Arguments, a Prescription of so many hundred years shall not be valid; for it is an Ancienter Right than any man can shew for his Estate: and for these Reasons do I fully approve of them. And whatever fault is in any of them, I must needs ascribe it to the Persons, and Abuses, rather than to the Nature of the Office. Much less can the Church be charged with blame, which, I am sure, by her Canons, designs the Preventing of all those abuses committed; and if the times at present will allow of no better, let every man bear his own burthen.

CHAP. II.

Of Christian Belief.

AND as I find *this Church thus* Rightly constituted, and under a Government the most truly Agreeable to the Apostolical Pattern, and the Practice of all Ages: So I cannot but admire it more, if possible, for the soundness of its *Faith* and *Doctrine*

For as it makes a true Faith necessary, as well as Practice; so it resolves this Faith into the true Author, and Object of it, God; It being most agreeable, that we should learn from Him, what to Believe of Him, and by what actions to please Him.

22 *Of Christian Belief.*

Now He hath, in his Goodness, order'd certain Books to be written, by Men inspired by Him, that do contain all that God would have us know, as from him, in order to our Salvation. And these Books all together we call the *Bible*, or *Holy Scriptures*. And this Book I am by the Church of *England* taught, to look on, as a compleat Rule of Faith, and Manners; And that neither a Man's own private Spirit, or Reason, nor the Authority and Commands of any Men, ought to be listened or attended to in opposition to it.

I reckon also that this Scripture is clear enough, as to all necessary points, to them that will make it their Business, without Prejudice; to consider, and understand it; And whatever hath been said against it, I find none, but only seeming Contradictions and Oppositions in it, which do allow of a very favourable Interpretation,
and

and Reconciliation; And that even these seeming Difficulties, and Contradictions, as well as the divers Translations of Scripture, and the various Readings, are chiefly, or only in small and indifferent cases, which concern not the Essence of our Religion. And to reconcile these seeming Oppositions, and to explain the whole, is a great part of the Office, and duty of the Clergy, the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, who are bound to instruct the People out of this Book, and to convince the Gainfayers.

And though, as Saint *Peter* says, many do wrest the Scripture to their own destruction; yet I look on it as very fit and necessary, that this Scripture should be in the Vulgar Language, and often read by the People; That so they themselves may see, and know the Law, by which they must be judged; that they may be satisfied the Clergy do not impose on them, and teach them a

24 *Of Christian Belief.*

Religion of their own invention ; and seeing every man must be judged at the last day severally by himself, and according to what he himself hath done ; it seems necessary, that he should now first judge for himself, whatever help or assistance he may have from another to make a right judgment.

And this sufficiency, and clearness of the Scripture, is the reason why I do not depend on the Authority or Credit of the Priest that expounds it, or Preacheth from it, but on the Scripture it self ; he being always bound to bring some clear passage of Scripture for the proof of what he saith. And therefore I do not look on any thing that he saith as infallible, any further than it is consonant to Scripture ; Nor do I reckon any infallible Interpreter at all to be given to the Church. For if there were any Infallible Interpreter of the Word, and Will of God, doubtless

less it would of all things have been the most plainly said, and the most frequently referred to in Scripture, because of the Infinite use of knowing it, and the Danger of being Ignorant of it; and God in his wisdom and goodness, would never have put so many particulars into the Scripture, which there is no such need we should know, and leave any thing out of Scripture, which it is so absolutely necessary that we should know.

And though it is true, that the *Church* did convey down to us the Books of Scripture, and so we receive the Scripture *from the Church*, as some of the Fathers have said, yet it doth not hence follow, that the Scripture received its *Authority* from the Church, or that the Church is above the Scripture, and to be believed before it. For the Scripture received its Authority only from God, who Inspired those Men that wrote it; and the Church, in Con-

veying down the Scripture to us, is to be look'd on only as a *witness* of such Books being written by Divinely inspired men, not as giving us those Books by its own *Authority*, to be received by us as Divinely inspired. For all that we need prove concerning the Scripture, is, that it was written by such and such men, and received as Divinely inspired. Now even Humane Testimony is sufficient to prove this, without any Authority. And to argue for the necessity of *Infallibility*, or *Divine Authority* in the Church, to assure us which is the Scripture, is the same thing as if we would admit only of a King and Parliament's Testimony, or Authority to prove, That such an Act of Parliament was formerly made. And therefore I may justly look on the Scripture as Infallible, tho' the Church that conveys it down to us, is Fallible. For otherwise, if the Church must be esteemed Infallible
in

in every thing, because she conveys down to us the Scriptures, which all own to be Infallible; By the same reason the Keeper of the Records of the *Tower*, or any where else, may urge that his Word ought to go as far as any of those Records, because he hath the keeping of them. And therefore as I may believe the Records, but discredit the man; so I may believe the Scripture, tho' I believe not the Church. Besides, a man may tell one thing true, but lye in many others; so the Church may be believed in handing down to us the Scripture, because it hath all collateral evidence to strengthen its Testimony, but yet need not be believed in every thing else, which she pretends to. Tho' the Church of *England* will disown nothing that can be proved to have been received and practised by the whole Church, from the Apostles days, such as the *Canon of Scripture*, the keeping of the first day of the Week holy,

B 5

28 *Of Christian Belief.*

holy, instead of the Seventh, *Infant-baptism, Episcopacy, &c.* but very strictly insists on them, because she reckons her self bound to keep up Unity with the first and purest Ages, and cannot think it probable, or possible, that an Universal practice, contrary to the design of Christ and his Apostles, should prevail immediately after, and even during the Apostles days.

But still we cannot allow of all things that the Church of *Rome* pretends an Universal, and constant Practice of; such as *Prayers to Saints, Prayers for the Dead, Transubstantiation, Adoration of the Host, Submission to the Pope's Supremacy, &c.* For they notoriously falsifie in their Quotations to this purpose, as any one will see that shall without prejudice, read their Books, and Ours, written on these Subjects. Much less do we own any Infallibility of *Tradition*, or make what is deliver'd down to us by it, to be

be of equal Authority with the Scripture, as the Council of *Trent* expressly doth. For Christ hath nowhere told us, That he would deliver some things by word of mouth, to be handed down to all Ages, which shall be of the same Necessity, and Infallibility, with what is written in Scripture. Nor is there any Intimation of any man, or number of men's being so extraordinarily guided and assisted, as without Error to convey down to us this Oral Tradition. And if they rely only on the General Promises made to the whole Church, of Christ's being *by his Spirit present with it*, we see not why a small part of the whole Church, *viz.* those of the *Roman* Communion, should take this Promise to it self, any more than the Reformed Western, or Eastern Churches, unless it can be proved that the *Italians* have better memories, or are honest men, and so fitter to convey down
old

30 *Of Christian Belief.*

old Traditions to us, than the *Greeks* or others; which, I believe, will be a hard matter to prove.—

Therefore we both deny any Tradition to be of equal Authority with the Scripture, and especially we find no number of men fit for the handing down such a Tradition to us, if it were given at first. And yet much less can we rely on any certain number of men, telling us that This, or That is such Infallible Tradition, and think our selves bound to believe them, say they what they will. And yet this is plainly the case with the Church of *Rome* concerning Tradition: They are not so solicitous that we should in all things believe, and do as the ancient Church did, but as the present Church of *Rome* would have us; for they know that we appeal in all cases to the Ancient Primitive Church, and challenge to be judged by it. And they know also, that the Ancient Church
hath

hath believed, and acted otherwise in many particulars, than they now do. But all their stickling for Tradition is to this purpose, that they may but get this one little point, That Tradition is infallible, and that they are the only Conveyers of it; that is, That they are Infallible, and that consequently we must Believe, and do in every thing, as they bid us. For nothing else is allowed for Tradition in the Church of *Rome*, but what the present Church says, and declares to be Tradition. And this being granted by us, there would be an end of all dispute. For then they may teach us a new Religion, a new Gospel, and say they have Tradition for it, and who can gainsay it, and so make us deny our old one, that Christ and the Apostles taught us: *But we have not so learned Christ.*

Besides, I confess, I see not any necessity of an Infallible Judge in the world. Nor hath God in his
Pro.

32 . *Of Christian Belief.*

Providence been wanting to his Church, in not providing one, as some of the Church of *Rome* have blasphemously argued. For seeing he hath given us, in the Scripture, a Rule and Foundation to proceed on, and our own Reason to apply it to our selves, and make use of it to our own purposes, I see not why we may not make use of this Book for its purposes, as well as we make use of other Books, for other purposes. And why cannot God speak his will as plainly to be understood, as men can, and do daily? and if there be Truth delivered in Scripture, why should not all men be able to apprehend, and discover it, seeing Truth is but one, and reason is the same to all, and especially seeing we shall be judged, every man for himself, and by a God that knows our hearts, who sees with what sincerity of heart, or with what byass and ill inclination, we apply this Rule to our selves.

Al-

Altho' if there were an Infallible Judge at *Rome*, according to their way of reasoning, it would not be much to the advantage of the Church, especially of us that live so far from *Rome*. For seeing I cannot hear the Pope himself speak, they must all be Infallible, that to the fourth or fifth hand perhaps, convey what he saith to me; for if any of these mistake, or wilfully deceive me, what must I do? Nay if I were at *Rome*, the Pope cannot be spoke to at all hours; for he takes state on himself sometimes, and sometimes hath the Gout, and other infirmities incident to old men, and doth not love to be disturbed by every one. And yet if I should speak with him, I perhaps should not be much the wiser. For to make a full use of such an Infallible Judge, we must be as infallible as he; for we may mistake him without an Infallible Spirit; and if he doth tell me true, and I do not
appre-

34 *Of Christian Belief.*

apprehend, or receive it so, I am still in a bad case. And yet it is evident that the words of an Infallible Judge, or Interpreter may be mistaken. For our Blessed Saviour himself was misunderstood, both by the *Jews*, and by his Disciples sometimes. And what shall we say then of this pretended Infallible Judge on the *Seven Hills*, who is often a Man of the weakest Understanding, and not always of the greatest clearness of expression, and who doth not know truth himself? For sometimes he hath excused himself from judging in a case in Divinity, by alledging that *he was not bred a Divine*, and therefore did not understand the Question. And yet methinks Knowledge is somewhat necessary in order to Infallibility. Besides, if a man should by chance, speak a very true Sentence, but doth not know what it means, and therefore cannot explain it to me, I may easily mistake.

mistake him, or apply what he saith, to an improper purpose. For words are ambiguous, and some mens Notions are found to fit things so well, that they often take the one for the other. And yet if there be any need of this Infallible Judge, there will be constant need of him; it will not be enough for him to speak now and then in a General Council, but very often, or always to sit, and have application made to him, according to their own Principles, and ways of arguing, because there are new Disputes, and Questions, and Heresies that are raised almost daily (for if the Pope can give any one standing Rule for resolving all Doubts, and defining Doctrines, we should be apt to think that God may have given this himself in Scripture: and this would spoil his Trade) and if a man hath not this Infallible Judge ready to resolve him, be he never so desirous of knowing truth, he may die in Heresie,

36 *Of Christian Belief.*

resie, and his case then must be very bad. So that there is an absolute necessity of a man's living very near the Pope, or else he can have no tolerable security of himself, but he may be in some considerable error. And the People of *Rome* must be the only happy people in this life, that only are sure of the true Catholick Religion, as living so under the constant droppings of Infallibility. And yet I believe *Rome* is the last place in the world to which the Priest would send you, to make you a good Catholick. But how if it happen after all this, that this old Gentleman at *Rome* dare not speak even what he thinks, for fear of angring this, or that party, *French*, or *Spanish*? or when a question is put to him, as concerning the immaculate conception of the *Blessed Virgin*, He sees that if he determine it either way, he shall lose, or at least disoblige a very powerful and numerous Order, and there-

therefore useth all the tricks of Tergiversation, and delay that can be, that he may not be forced to decide the Controversie; as we know it happen'd within these seventy years? If this Gentleman did know more than other men, what would his knowledge signifie if he be afraid to own or declare what he knows? Therefore let them decide their own Controversies first, by this their Infallible Judge, before they pretend to impose him upon us. Will any man believe me that I have an Infallible Cure for the Gout, when he sees me lie groaning under it all the year round? And therefore not till they have determined among themselves the question of the *Immaculate Conception*, of the *Power of the Pope* besides, or without Council, and convinced the *French King*, and Clergy of the *Pope's Infallibility*, and absolute *unlimited Authority*, and of the *nullity of the Liberties* of the

38 *Of Christian Belief.*

the *Gallican Church*, shall we ever think they believe themselves, when they say the Pope is infallible; or if He be, I am sure it is to as little purpose, as if He were not. So that *Infallibility* is only a long word to amuse People. It is down-right Force that doth all things in the Church of *Rome*; and, as I dare say at this time it will be granted me, the King of *France's* Army signifies more, than the Pope's *Infallibility*, to the converting of his own Subjects to the *Romish* Faith.

And though we allow not of any *Infallibility* resident in any Man, or number of Men on Earth, yet we have as great a certainty of the Truth of our Religion, as the matter is capable of. We have all the Proofs of the Reality of our Blessed Saviour's appearing in the World, of the Apostles preaching according to his will, and committing to writing the substance of what they taught, in those Books which we call

call the New Testament; and we have all the Evidence of the Truth, and uncorruptness, and also of the Sense and Meaning of those Books, that we can expect, and that a matter of that nature will allow of; and I think no Man in his wits will require more.

And according to this Church also, I allow of the three Creeds, called by the names of the *Apostles*, *Nicene*, and *Athanasian* Creeds; both because they are consonant to, and the very substance of the Scriptures, as to the great Points of our Belief; and also for the antiquity of their composure, and the general assent and reception that they have found for so many ages in the Church of Christ. For I have a very great reverence for whatever can be proved very ancient in Religion, and to have been generally received by the Church; as we profess a wonderful respect for the Four first general Councils, which
Pope

40 *Of Christian Belief.*

Pope Gregory the First said he revered as the Four Evangelists. For by giving this attention to the Ancients, we go the best way to keep our Religion the same, and also maintain Unity with them. So that if they were part of the true Church of Christ, so are we; and if it would have been our duty to have kept unity with them, if we had lived in the same Age with them, but in Countries remote from them; it is as much our Duty to preserve the same Unity with them, though we live so long after them, seeing we pretend to be Members of the same Body of Christ with them.

But though we allow thus of the ancient Creeds, yet we cannot approve of those Additions, which Pope Pius the Fourth had the confidence to make to the *Nicene* Creed, according to the Definitions of the Council of *Trent*, where after the last words of the *Nicene* Creed,

Creed, *I look for the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life of the World to come*, He adds these Points, "Of
"Seven Sacraments properly so called; of a proper and propitiatory
"Sacrifice in the *Mass* for quick and
"dead; of Transubstantiation; of
"Communion in one kind; of Purgatory; of Invocation of Saints;
"of the Veneration of their Reliques; of the Veneration of the
"Images of *Christ*, and the Blessed
"Virgin, and other Saints; of Indulgences; Of the Church of
"Rome, as Mother and Mistress of
"all Churches: Concluding, that
"this is the true Catholick Faith,
"out of which no man can be
"Saved.

For these Articles are neither consonant to Scripture, nor Antiquity; they were added by an unjust, and illegal authority, after the Decrees of a pack'd Assembly of men; all the ancient Church, as well as the bigger, and better part of the modern

42 *Of Christian Belief.*

modern Church, disowning them; that is, the Doctrines were first established by the Bishop of *Rome*, and these Articles, pursuant to those Doctrines, were added to the Creed by the Bishop of *Rome*, and his Creatures, as if his Conscience, and judgment were to be a Model for all other Mens. And yet to these Articles are the Clergy of *Italy*, *France*, *Spain*, &c. bound to subscribe, as well as to the Trinity itself, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, or his Resurrection from the Dead.

But we keep only to the Creeds themselves, without any additions. And for a right understanding them, and to prove them consonant to Scripture, and pure antiquity, we have several Books to help us, and especially that incomparable Exposition of the Apostles Creed, made by the most learned the late Bishop of *Chester*.

And

And these Creeds I not only fully believe, but I verily think it my Duty, and advantage to *profess* often, according to the Orders of our Church. For by so doing, I live in an actual profession of the Christian Faith, according to my Vow of Baptism. I keep a *Summary* of my Belief constantly in my head, and yet every Article is of great moment, if we mind the consequences of it. And whilst I keep but this Epitome of my Christian Faith present to my thoughts, I shall not so easily be seduced into any Error in Belief, or Practice, which is contrary to it.

I approve also of the Books of the *Apocrypha*, at least some of them, to be read for the instruction of the People, as a kind of comment on the Old Testament, or somewhat between the Old, and New Testament. For we find some kind of *Dawnings* of Christianity in them. But I am taught not to

44 *Of Christian Belief.*

reckon them of equal Authority with the Scriptures, nor do we establish any Point of Doctrine on them, they having not been received by the *Jewish* Church before our Saviour's time, as Divinely inspired, but were written after the sealing up of Prophecy under the Old Law, and before the Revelation of God's will by the Gospel. And they not having any Original Authority in themselves, as written by Prophets, it is impossible the Church should now give them the Authority of Divinely inspired Books, as the Council of *Trent* pretends to do. For the Church cannot make him a Prophet, that really was no Prophet, nor own'd for such for many hundreds of Years.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of Gospel-Obedience.

AND I find also that in this Church a good and holy life is as much urged, reckoned as necessary, and, I bless God, I think I can say, as much practised, as any where else in the World.

Indeed we confess that there is no man that lives, and converseth in the World, but sinneth, *Christ* being the only Person without sin Original, and Actual. And that the very best things that we do, we are still in Truth and Justice, to account of our selves but as *unprofitable servants*, and that we do but what it was our Duty to do. And therefore

46 Of Gospel-Obedience.

we cannot think it possible for us to merit any thing, in strict Justice, at the hand of God, all the power and ability by which we do any thing of good, being of his giving. And therefore of the best of our Actions we say with Saint Paul, they are of the ability which God giveth. But tho' a perfect unsinning obedience is not to be expected here, yet still we reckon that the best Obedience we can perform, is necessary; that it is not sufficient for us to believe, Salvation being promised to such a Faith only, as is productive of good Works.

As to the concurrence of God's grace, I reckon it absolutely necessary in order to my doing any thing as I ought. And tho' I cannot define to a point, just how far God works, and how far we work, in every good action, yet I am sure I can do somewhat through God that strengthens me, and I am sure also that God worketh in me to will, and to

to do, and that he will do more and more for me; accordingly as I make a good use of the Grace that he gives me, and pray to him for more strength, and therefore that I am somewhat active both in the using of Mercies, and in Praying for more Grace. And I am sure I answer all objections, and satisfy all difficulties, if I thus ascribe all the good that I do to God assisting me, and take all my failings and weaknesses to my self. And on this ground as I shew my self the necessity of doing the best that I am able, and cut off all Plea of Merit for my self or others; so I shew also the necessity of Prayer to God for his Grace, and lay a Foundation for Thankfulness to him.

For now by the New Covenant, there is a strict obligation to all kind of Christian Duties, tho' there is allowance made for humane frailties and infirmities. There is indeed a way made through the sufferings.

48 *Of Gospel-Obedience.*

ferings and merits of Christ for forgiveness on Repentance: But still it is more acceptable with God, that we live so, as far as it is possible, as to need no Repentance.

I reckon good Works therefore absolutely necessary in order to Salvation, but that it is not so much the Actions themselves, as the Mind and Temper, and Design which they are done with, or the Christian Principles which they proceed from, called *Faith* in Scripture, to which the worth of them is to be ascribed, and for which they are accepted of God through the Merits and Mediation of Christ.

The good Works which are required of us as Christians in the New Testament, and in the Ten Commands, or the Moral part of the Old Testament, all Duties and Vertues there commanded I reckon my self bound, as I am able, to perform; and all Sins or Actions there forbidden, I make Conscience

ence to abstain from ; and do not think that by obeying one Command I am free from others ; or that because there are sins greater and less, yet that any are perfectly *Venial*.

I reckon my self bound also to obey the commands of my Lawful Governours, both in Church and State, not only for Peace, and Order sake, but for the sake of God who hath commanded me so to do, and am willing to forego my own Right often, and deny my own profit, rather than disobey, or oppose a command of my lawful Governors, where I can obey them without sin. But I religiously abstain from setting up the Commands of men in opposition to the Commands of God, and cannot think that I shall be excusable, if I obey the Commands of Men to the neglect of the Commands of God. And therefore, for Example sake, tho' I pay all deference and obedience to the

50 *Of Gospel-Obedience.*

Laws of the Church, as knowing that God hath bid me to obey it; yet I dare not do, as is done in the Church of *Rome*, when the Church commands me one thing, and the Law of God the contrary. As when they say, *God bids me obey the Church, and therefore it is all one which of the two I obey.* For God only bids me obey the Church in such cases as are not defined by the Laws of God, but doth not give the Church leave to command any thing contrary to God's Law, nor oblige me to attend to it, or obey it, if it should so command.

I thankfully own, and frequently commemorate the blessed Son of God's coming into the world, to dye for us, and satisfie for our sins; but yet I think not, that he, by his sufferings, hath either excused me from obedience to God's commands, or exempted me from punishment, if I obstinately persevere in my disobedience. For by
Christ's

Christ's coming, I am, if possible; more obliged to a good life, being now obliged to a stricter obedience out of Love and kindness to him, who hath done and suffered so much for me. And all his Commands are Laws, which are strictly to be obeyed by me; only there is now a provision made, that sincere, and hearty obedience, tho' mingled with many imperfections (as it will always be whilst we live in these Houses of Clay) shall for the sake of Christ be looked on as if it were perfect, and our failings will in Mercy be forgiven, if we immediately repent us truly of them, and beg God's Pardon for them, and resolve for the future, by the assistance of God, to live better.

And therefore I gratefully own the Doctrine of *Repentance*, and the hopes of Pardon on Repentance; but yet I think that it doth not at all encourage sin, nor is it to

be lookt on by us before we sin, only it is provided to prevent Despair when we have sinned, and there is no other Remedy. And it is a double affront to God, for me to sin out of hopes of Pardon on my Repentance. For by this means I both break his Laws, and also abuse his Mercies; and the most severe Punishments are threatned to such a course.

And if the doctrine of Repentance, or of Pardon upon Repentance, will not give me any liberty to sin, nor excuse me, if I sin wilfully; then much less can I expect a dispensation from obedience to the Laws of God any other way.

And by Repentance, I do not understand, only a bare *Confessing* that I have sinned, and sorrow for it, only out of fear of punishment, which they call *Attrition*, but reckon *Contrition* essential to Repentance, and necessary to the Pardon of my sins; viz. that I be heartily grieved

grieved for the hainousness of my sins in themselves, and their being so displeasing in the sight of God, and am fully purposed and resolved, by the blessing of God, to live better for the future; and also that neither by the power of the Priest, nor any other way, can this *Attrition* be turned into *Contrition*, or be sufficient for Repentance and Pardon.

I reckon that every good work done thus, by God's assistance, and with an honest mind, is well pleasing to God, and will, if we persevere, in due time have its reward. But this is to be ascribed to his own goodness, and the Merits of Christ, not to any worth or *merit* in the actions themselves. For how can a few good Actions, and mingled with many Failings, or a whole course of such Actions, for the little while that we live upon earth, bear any proportion to, much less deserve, eternal rewards in the world.

54 *Of Gospel Obedience.*

world to come? especially how can any man pretend to merit at his hands, by whose very aid and assistance we do any thing that is good? For of the best of our Actions we must in truth and justice say, as *David* said of his own, and his Prince's offerings, 1 Chron. 29. 14. *All things come of thee, and of thy own have we given to thee.*

I do not think that I do my duty sufficiently by abstaining from evil. For there are Affirmative as well as Negative Commands; and if I only should *eschew Evil*, and not endeavour to *do good*, I must, according to the Tenor of the Gospel, be reckon'd among the *unprofitable Servants*.

And in this consideration I take care not only to avoid the sins, which I see many Christians too much indulge, or which I am, by Temper, Education, Custom, or Company, more than ordinary inclin'd to; but also I reckon it my in-

indispensible Duty, to be constant in all the parts of *Positive Christianity*; knowing that Heaven is not a state of silence, but infinite invaluable Happiness, and therefore, (which I cannot possibly think) can be gotten with the doing of nothing. And even among Men, there is little Commendation thought due to him, of whom the best that can be said, is, *That he hath done no harm.*

Now by *Positive Christianity*, or Affirmative Duties, I understand such things as I *actually* do out of Obedience to God, and to serve him; and not only *forbear* doing what he forbids me.

So in reference to himself, I am so far from doing any thing to dishonour, or blaspheme God, that I every way, that I am able, seek to *glorify, praise, and serve* him.

In reference to my Neighbour, I not only *forbear* wronging him, but I do him all the good, by *good Advice,*

56 Of Gospel-Obedience.

vice, by *speaking well* of him, by *aiding* and *assisting* him in any case, that I am able.

And as to my self, I think it not enough to lie on my Bed, and avoid the sins of *Intemperance*, &c. but that by all the Diligence that I am able, I study to *Improve my Mind*, get a *Conquest over my Passions*, and every way work up my self to a better temper, and practice.

I am so far from doing the World harm, or making it worse, that I endeavour to leave it *better than* I found it. Hence I not only *praise Piety* constantly my self, but I do what I can to *Promote*, and *Encourage* it in others; which, if I am in a *Publick Station and Employment*, I can indeed do more effectually; and I am sure I shall be called to an account why I do it not. And if I am in the most *Private Capacity* that can be, yet by my *silent, and constant Example*, I shall do some good; by my *Advice* to my Friends

Of Gospel-Obedience. 57

I may do more; and by *occasional Discourse*, or making use of such opportunities as will often present themselves, I may be an Instrument to a great deal of good, and all this without being Conceited, or Pragmatical; without intrenching on other Mens business, going out of my own place, or disturbing the World.

I own a good and wise *Providence* watching over the World, and not only over *Publick*, but even extending to the most *Private* Affairs, and Persons, and accordingly I daily commit my self, and all my Concerns to the Government, and over-ruling of that good God, that I am sure loves me, and knows my Case and Wants better than I do my self. But though I thus own a *Providence*, yet I take a Religious Care not to tempt God, by running my self into Evil, and then to expect God to keep me out, and deliver me. Just as though I
know

58 *Of Gospel-Obedience.*

know God's *Grace* to be All sufficient for me, yet I dare not expect it to keep me from sin, if I wilfully, and with my eyes open run into it.

For God's *Grace* and *Protection* is promised; and to be expected only in such cases, as in which I have done all that was in me for my self, and then I am allowed to hope for help from God; or in such cases as into which I am unwittingly and unwillingly led, or in which I am innocently, and honestly engaged; and here I am sure of suitable aid, and support, if I humbly and earnestly make my Request, but not where I wilfully expose my self to Sin and Evil.

And on this Principle I do not *Expose my self to Temptations*, either as to *Estate*, by *Gaming*, or as to *Life* by *Duels*, or as to *Religion*, and a good *Conscience*, by aiming only at the *lowest degree* of what is *Vertuous* or *Commendable*, or taking

king all the *Advantages* against Religion, and my duty that I think I possibly may; or by *going to Mass*, or any other Irregular way of Worship, though perhaps out of *vanity* only, and *Curiosity*, tempt God, and my self. For I know not but God may leave me when I thus dally with him. And the wise Son of *Syrach* says, *He that loves danger, shall fall into it.* And our Saviour, that we must not thus *Tempt the Lord our God.* For in all cases, in which the Interest of my Soul is concerned, I do nothing by Fancy, or Humour, but with all the Judgment, and Reason that I have, I consider seriously the Fitness, or Lawfulness of it, as knowing that it is here, as in War, where one Errour is Fatal; and if I be taken off in a sinful Practice, there is no Rescuing me, or Retrieving me for ever.

As to a *share of the things of this life*, I keep my self in a great indifference.

60 *Of Gospel-Obedience.*

difference, For I am sure that life it self is not always Good, or a Blessing; and then much less are any of these things very desirable, that serve only for the Conveniences of Life. And seeing I never pray to God for my own, or my Friends longer Life, only as far forth as it shall be for the Glory of God, and good of Religion, and the World, or in order to our being the better fitted and prepared for Heaven; much less am I solicitous for more Estate, or make That the subject of my Prayers. For I am sure that *every one* cannot have a great Estate, *few men* can bear or manage a great Estate as they ought, and *no man* needs it. And in the Lord's own prayer we are taught, and allow'd only to pray for *Bread*, or what is necessary, and That only from hand to mouth, *this day our daily bread.*

I am therefore well content with the little that I have, as thinking
that

that God knows my strength and ability best, and what is properest for me, and as knowing that if I should get more, tho' by the most lawful means, and by the most moderate endeavours, it will be proportionably expected that I should do the more good, be the more useful in the world, and I shall have more Talents to answer for the Receipt of; as on the other hand, the less I have, the less Temptations I am lyable to at present, the less tyed I shall be to this world, and the less will be my account at the last day. And I am very sensible that when a Man comes to die, he will wish he had enjoyed less of this World; there being at least some danger of *receiving our good things here*. And therefore tho' a great Estate may afford more ease and delight here, yet a mean fortune seems to afford more security in order to hereafter. And hence I pray for such a Portion as is fittest for me, and with which

62 *Of Gospel-Obedience.*

I shall do most good ; that God would suit my Condition to my Desires, or my Desires to my Condition, that I may serve him chearfully, and without Distraction. And I think not that I am out of the favour of God, or even of good men, because I have less than others, but do much condemn the unjust Measure of the world, of slighting a Man, because he is poor, or of valuing him for his Outside rather than for his Inside. For Vertue and Prudence, Integrity and an earnest desire to do good are more true Accomplishments, than Beauty, Riches, Honours, &c. And He is the most considerable Man in the world, not that enjoys most of this world, but that doth most good in it ; For him the world will most miss, for him good Mens Prayers are most, over him the Providence of God will watch in a more peculiar manner ; and therefore he is every way the most valuable and considerable Person.

Of Gospel-Obedience. 63

I am taught *to pray* at home in private always, and in my own Family too, constantly, especially if I have not the advantage of going with my Family to the Publick Service daily. But if I have the opportunity of Publick Worship, I am constant in it, as in all other Offices of Piety, and fear not being called an Hypocrite; for this is another of the unjust Measures of the world, to reckon a Man guilty of Hypocrisie, if he be more strict in Religion, and more scrupulous of a Sin, than others are; whereas true Piety must necessarily openly shew itself, and we are bid to *Let our Lights shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorifie God.*

And agreeable to this, I not only openly profess a strict Regard to *Justice*, but exactly practise it towards all men. I pay all men their Dues, all Officers and Offices in Church and State, according to *St. Paul's* command, *Rom. 13.* I pay
not

64 *Of Gospel-Obedience.*

not only all honour and respect, but also all faithful service and obedience to the King, as God's Vicegerent, and the common Father of the Country. I cannot endure to hear him ill spoken of, or hurt in his Reputation, or injur'd as to his just Rights, either in Power, or Revenue.

And as to my Fellow Subjects, I maintain an exact justice, so as not only to forbear open Violence, Oppression, or Fraud towards any, but also to take care punctually to pay my Debts, and to answer all Promises, and Obligations. For not paying Debts, is much the same thing as Robbing, or violently taking from another, There being but very little difference between taking Money from a Man when he is unwilling, and keeping it from him when he desires it, and ought in Justice to have it.

From this Principle I am also punctual in paying my Tythes, and all such Publick Dues for the maintenance

tenance of Religion, and for my part take such care otherwise that they that wait on the Service of God, and watch for my Soul, may have a handsome maintenance, lest by my niggardliness it should happen that the Service of God should be discouraged (and Religion will alwaies suffer in the Ministers of it) or lest worthy Men should be disheartened from entring into the holy Office, or lest they that already serve at the Altar, should be forced to any unlawful, or any unbecoming means to maintain themselves; but that they may have advantages, and helps fit for their Improvement in Learning, that they may be able to defend Religion, and convince the Gainsayers. And this is no more than common Justice; for as they share not with others in secular Business and Trade, and other advantagious ways of raising themselves, so they ought to be provided with such a maintenance

66 *Of Gospel-Obedience.*

as answers the ingenious Education they have had, and the Relation they bear to Religion.

Finally, I consider my self as to all the Capacities, and Relations, that I am in in the World, and endeavour to behave my self suitably to them: knowing there is a distinct Duty, and Obligation between Father and Children, Husband and Wife, Superiours and Inferiours, Friends and Equals, and which therefore every Christian must take care to answer and perform: and which are very fully expressed in that excellent Book of the *Whole Duty of Man*.

But much of this Nature will come to be considered also in the Sixth Chapter, under the Head of *Civil Conversation*.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Service of God in Publick.

I Am taught also in this Church, that it is not sufficient for me to *Believe* well, and to perform the Duty of a Christian by my self, or *in private*, but that there is a *publick Profession*, and an open exercise of several Acts of Religion necessary.

For many Duties of Christianity do require the doing of them in Company, and it is an open Profession that doth most encourage Religion, and provoke other men to an imitation. And by the nature of the Publick Service which I frequent,

68 *Of the Service of God*

quent, and by my demeanour in it I give a Sample of my self, and men may thence take an estimate how I am affected in my mind, and how I carry my self in my more private retirements. And I find in the Gospel, that Christ promi-
 seth his Blessings especially to *Publick Services*, where *Two or Three* are gathered together in his name, and therefore that it ought always to be preferred before Private. And *Publick Communion* hath always been accounted necessary in order to our *letting our light shine before men*, and making the world know what opinion we are of. For the *Publick Articles*, and Confession of Faith of that Church with which I Communicate, being known to all the world, my Faith and Belief also, as to the main Articles of Religion, is known at the same time. But the excellency of *Publick Service*, and its Preference before Private, is fully made out, in that late
 excel-

excellent Treatise of Prayer by
Dr. Patrick,

And for this reason also, I religiously abstain from Communicating with any Heretical or Schismatical Congregation, that is, with any that hold any erroneous opinion contrary to any of the great Articles of Christianity, or that but keep private and separate meetings from the Publick Worship that is Lawfully Established, lest I be reckoned of their party and persuasion. For all such separate meetings are breaches of Charity; and tho' they may possibly encourage no Heretical opinions now, yet it is odds but such opinions will find shelter, and countenance among them. Such Clancular and irregular Conventicles being the proper Seed-plots for such weeds to grow in. They break the Unity of the body of Christ, and disobey Lawful Authority in the Church. And I am sure that if they can Commu-

70 *Of the Service of God*

nicate without sin, for them to separate is a very great sin. Besides that all such private meetings are dangerous to the State; for all men, that are ill affected to the State, will herd with them, and so will be secure of a Party. And it weakens also the publick strength, when a number of men make themselves a distinct Party, who will be so far from joining heartily with the Publick, that they will reckon it their duty to oppose, and find fault with what is done, if it be but to give some excuse and countenance to their own Schism. And by thus finding fault with the Publick management, they will also draw all discontented people to them (who are always numerous in every State) and so not only strengthen their *Schism* against the Church, but also form a dangerous *Faction* against the State.

And as I thus Conscientiously forbear the Going to any *irregular*
unlaw-

unlawful Assemblies, tho' only out of curiosity, because my very being there but once, and out of no bad design, is a giving them countenance and encouragement (for number and company is always encouraging) and is also a putting my self out of God's protection, by tempting him in running my self into evil and danger, which he may justly suffer me to fall into: So also I am very scrupulous of leaving *my own Church* at all, or going to any other Church, or *Regular Congregation*. For the thus running to other Churches generally argues a vanity of mind; it is oft the Mother of Schism and Faction, and rather tends to advance popularity than true Religion, it gives a very bad Example, it discourageth my own Parish Congregation, and I do not think it is so likely to have a blessing from God. For God will give his blessing to us especially where he himself hath placed us,

72 *Of the Service of God*

and in regular ways, he being the God of Order, and not of Confusion. And I am sure I have at least as good Prayers, and the Word of God it self as pure, as I can find it in any other Church. And tho' it is possible I may hear a neater and more elegant Sermon there, yet besides that I do not think there is so much Religion, properly so called, in hearing Sermons, they being not so much in reference to God, as to our selves, and for our own benefit; I say besides this, if at my return home from such a Sermon, I sit down, and consider what I have gotten by my wandring, I shall find, that rather my curiosity, and fancy are gratified, than Piety and Devotion advanced in me, and that I am rather *Pleased*, than *Instructed*, or made either *wiser*; or *better*.

And I keep constantly to my own Parish on all occasions, not only on Sundays, but other days, setting
down

down this for a Rule, that Prayers hinder no business. And if it should once happen that I should suffer a little by it, I am sure it will be abundantly recompensed some other way; tho³ commonly there is no need of that; for so hath God in mercy ordered the world, and mens concerns in it, that a man may easily, at least, with a little forecast, so order all his Business, that there shall be time enough both for Publick and Private Devotion. Nay indeed with most men it is certain that I need desire them only to spend that time in Devotion, or Reading, or in any other method in order to Heaven, which else they would be perfectly idle in, and would, as we say, hang on their hands, and which they are not obliged to spend in any necessary, or useful business of Life. So that the most diligent man of the world, and he that hath most Business, with a little contrivance,

D 4

74 *Of the Service of God*

trivance, may find time enough for constant Devotion ; and it will be a Relaxation, as well as Comfort to his mind , and will procure for him moreover a Blessing from God on his other, and secular business.

And when I come to the Publick Service, I come not out of custom, or to please others , or get a Reputation, or only with such a kind of disposition of mind , as when I make a visit to a Friend , or go to any common place and company. For when I come to Church, as I am going, I always think with my self, now am I going to appear before God in a more especial manner ; and I reflect on some, or all the designs of a Publick Prayer and Service, and for which I go now, and at all other times. For I must always propound to my self , and design by this, and every other act of Publick Devotion, to *pay the Homage* due from me to my great Creator, and Benefactor, who hath
thus

thus commanded to be served, and acknowledged by me; by *Praises*, to magnifie and extol him for his infinite perfections in himself; by *Thanksgivings*, to thank and honour him for the mercies already vouchsafed to all mankind, his Church in general, or This Church and Nation, as well as my self in particular; and by my humble *Prayers and Supplications* to beg a continuance of all the good things we enjoy, and a supply of those that we do, or shall want, for my self, and others; as also by my *example*, as far as I can, to keep up, and encourage Religion and Piety in the World, and shew what Church and Profession I am of.

And my but thinking of these ends of my coming to Publick Service, will even awe me into a Devout and Reverent Carriage, and will make me attentive when I am there, and so to make a good use and application of all parts of Pub-

76 *Of the Service of God*

lick Service to my proper occasions.

I always contrive to come before Prayers begin, both to shew my willingness, and desire to worship God, and that the Publick Service may not be discouraged for lack of Company, and lest I miss any part of Service, especially the first part, in which there is both the *Confession*, *Absolution*, and the *Lord's Prayer*, and also that by my coming a little before Prayers begin, I may have some time to prepare my self for what I am going to do.

In the first place I fall down on my knees, to thank God for all his mercies, and particularly for this other opportunity of appearing before him, beseeching him to give a Blessing on all the Congregation, as well as on my self, that he will assist us in what we are about to do, and accept of what we shall do; Pardoning our Infirmities, and doing

ing for our selves, our Church, and Nation, abundantly more than we are able either to ask or think, for the sake of Jesus Christ that dyed for us.

When I am risen from my Private Prayers, and at all other times during Publick Service in the Church, I use as little *Ceremony* to others as possibly I can, (tho' I take care to be wanting in no part of civil Ceremony abroad in a common place.) For I reckon that the common Ceremonies of Bowing to one that comes in, or to a friend that I see in the Church, or to one that sneezeth, or on the like occasions, is a kind of Compliment that may very well and ought to be spared; for it doth not so well become the place where I am, nor the business I come about; it argues some kind of lightness of mind, or will create it, and is certainly distracting both to my self and others; and I may be sure that no man that considers
the

78 *Of the Service of God*

the Sacredness of the place, and occasion, and that sees my Civility and Courteousness abroad, will ever think the worse of me, if I be more reserved, and less ceremonious at Church.

And all along the Service I take care both to be Uncovered in token of respect, and to shew I consider the Majesty of him before whom I appear, and also to carry my self with all Gravity, Silence, and Inoffensiveness to others, neither by Talking, Gazing about, nor any light or unseemly carriage to be a disturbance to them; all indecency of carriage arguing a wandring mind, and is both unbecoming Religion, and a scandal to other men. Neither do I bring Dogs into the Church, or encourage those that are brought, very great unseemliness often following it, and it being at the best, and always a hindrance of composedness of Thought, a distraction of Devotion,

tion, and argues some Irreverence towards God.

While the *Exhortation* is Reading, I stand gravely, and mind seriously what is there said, and thereby more fit my self for all that is to follow, resolving by the blessing of God, to keep my thoughts so fixed on what I am going to do, and every part of Service, as the Worship of the great God, and the Salvation of my own Soul do require.

At the *Confession*, with the Congregation, I fall down on my Knees, that being the posture enjoined by the Church, and the humblest posture esteemed in these Countries. And I not only acknowledge my own sins, and the sins of the Church and Congregation in general, but as far as I am able, such particular sins of my own as are either greater in themselves, and of a more provoking nature, or else that having been lately committed,
had

80 *Of the Service of God*

had not been so very particularly and fully Repented of by me. I am heartily sorry for them, and beg God's Pardon of them, that they may never rise up against me in this Life, if it be his will, but especially not in the other Life. And whilst I beg his Grace, that we may live Godly, Righteous, and sober Lives, at the same time I resolve with my self, that by his Grace and Assistance, I will strive and endeavour to lead every way a better Life, be more constant in every good action, and more carefully avoid those sins that I have just now confessed, than hitherto I have done.

When the Priest pronounceth the *Absolution*, both here, and in the Communion Service, I attend to it, and receive it with all gladness and humility of mind, begging that this Pardon, which God hath given his Ministers power to pronounce in general, may be applied to my self, and my cases in particular. There-
fore

fore I esteem this Absolution very much, it being the Voice of God, and being pronounced at the Command of God, as the *Augustane* Confession speaketh; but it being only on the Conditions that we *Repent* and *Believe*, I immediately resolve to Repent and Believe, and I pray to God to Assist me, and Absolve me; and I am encouraged to hope that I am in God's favour, and that he doth pardon, and accept of me, when I hear this gracious Declaration of his mercy to all true Penitents. And I take it as well, and doubt not but it will be to as good purpose to me, as if it had been spoken to my self alone, and in a more presuming way and manner. For it being pronounced by so truly a constituted Priest, in God's name, and with his hearty desire, and Prayer for Pardon to his Congregation accompanying it, and the People at the same time devoutly accepting of it, and the

terms.

82 *Of the Service of God*

terms on which it is granted ; there seems nothing wanting as to what I can expect from the Church ; and I have the same assurance also from God, as if it were pronounced the most authoritatively, according to the practice of the Church of Rome, *I absolve thee*. For seeing the Pardon of sins is in reference to the Life to come, I cannot expect so full and absolute a Pardon here, but that if I continue in, or return to a vicious course, even my former sins will return upon me. And seeing it comes only from God, I regard especially the Promise of God, who hath promised forgiveness of sins to them that truly repent, and care not whether the Minister, who is as it were, the Herald, or Person who makes Declaration of this promise, pronounce it authoritatively, *I absolve thee*, or declaratively, *He absolveth*. Especially I being very sure that God will rather do more than less, when he sees we take not too much

much

much upon our selves. He loves Modesty and Humility in all cases, especially in reference to himself, and will rather give the more, when we presume, and challenge the less

When the *Lord's Prayer* is read, I joyn with it, and repeat it, as the Church enjoins; my very repeating it stirring up my own attention better to regard and mind the full, and comprehensive sense of each Petition; and to help our Infirmities, this most excellent Prayer is several times used, that so we may have opportunity to recollect, or attend to that sense of it the second or third time, which by reason of the narrowness, or distraction of our minds, or the vast senseness of the Prayer it self, we were not able to mind sufficiently the first time that it was read:

Indeed I very much approve of, and commend this Order of our Church, in requiring that the People shall with their own mouths Repeat

84 *Of the Service of God*

pear the *Confession*, *Lord's Prayer*, *Psalms*, *Hymns*, and other *Responses*. For by this the People are taught, that they are as much concerned in the Service of God, as the Priest, and ought to bear a part in it. The People's being required to answer sometimes, awakens and quickens their Attention and Devotion, which else would be asleep or remiss, and by their thus frequently joining in full sentences, and by saying *Amen* at the end of every Prayer, they not only hear how the Priest prays to God, but make every Prayer, and Praise their own act and deed, are active in the Service of God, keep up a Sense of God and Religion more in their own minds, and so may hope to have a Blessing from God accordingly. But in reading the Psalms, or other Hymns alternately, I not only mind what I read my self, but as much what the Priest readeth, and apply it all to my self, and our own cases, with such a temper

per of mind as becomes a Christian.

Indeed I am very glad that the *Psalms* are so much used, and so constantly in our Liturgy, not only by reason of our Conformity herein with the ancient People of God, the *Jews*, and the ancient Church of Christ in the first Ages, but also for the sensibleness and devotion of the *Psalms* in general, which may be easily and properly applied to our selves, and to our cases, if we by *Zion*, *Jerusalem*, &c. understand our own Church and Nation, turning sometimes a Prayer into a Denunciation, and an Assertion into a Prayer, as there will be occasion, and which will be very natural and easie for a truly devoutly disposed mind to do; as every one may see, that will but read and use Doctor *Patrick's* excellent Paraphrase on the Book of *Psalms*. But especially I admire the Book of *Psalms*, for all the *Thanksgivings*, and *Praises*
to

86 *Of the Service of God*

to God in it, that make up the bigger part of that most excellent Book; *Thanks* and *Praise* being doubtless the most acceptable part of Divine service, they being what we offer to God for his sake, not our own, they arguing the most elevated, and well disposed mind. For the most selfish man will *pray* sometimes, and *beg a boon*; but pride, stubbornness, or ingratitude will not suffer him to *Praise*, or *Thank* his Benefactor. And yet the highest of the Praises, and Thanks that we can give, are both strictly due from us to God, and are all the Returns that we properly can make him for all the innumerable Mercies we receive from him.

When the *Lessons* are read, I compose my self with all the attention and respect imaginable, as to the word and message of God himself to me, and cannot but admire at, and pity those Men that seem mighty attentive at, and place much

Reli.

Religion in hearing a *Sermon*, and yet are perfectly careless at, and seem almost to despise the Reading of the *Scripture*; seeing whatever Authority or excellency any *Sermon* hath, is derived from these *Scriptures*; and that the very best *Sermons* must be judged of, and examined by the *Scripture*, and are to be condemned, if they be not consonant to it. And tho' I know the *Scripture* very well already, and know beforehand what will be read, yet I am never the less attentive. For by exact attention it very often falls out, that I observe somewhat from the *Scripture*, which I had not observed before; at least I have my old notions revived, and as from God further impressed on me. And also by coming to hear the same things read which I knew before, I encourage the more Ignorant to come, and countenance the Publick Service, as well as do an Act of Homage, and worship to God. Therefore

88 *Of the Service of God*

fore I expect not new things to be taught me generally, either out of the Scripture, or in Sermons, but by constantly having the same great truths urged to me, I have a more exact and uniform Notion of Religion imprinted on me, and my mind is more inclined, and worn into a suitable composure.

The *Hymns* between, and after the Lessons, I joyn in, as I do in the Psalms, they being all Praises of God, either for the coming of *Christ* into the World, and being made known to us, when so many of the great Men of the World, both formerly, and now, have been ignorant of him, as in the *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, and *Nunc dimittis*; or else to Praise God for that, and all other his Mercies in the *Te Deum*, and other Hymns. And surely no Man can grudge such a piece of service now, who hopes that it will be his business, and happiness to do the like to all Eternity.

With

With the same Devotion do I stand up, and rehearse the *Creed* with the Priest, to evidence my Continuance in the Faith of Christ; of which that is an Epitome. Besides that to profess my Belief in God, and of what he hath taught, is a very acceptable piece of service; I honour God by it, and make my self more religiously affected: So that every command of Religion will have a better effect on me; For the force of every Command depends on the truth of the *Creed*, and is enhanced, as to me, by a serious reflection on my *Creed*.

And then with the Congregation I kneel down also, and in all things demean my self, as the Order of the Church requires, and as the rest of the Congregation doth; the *Posture* being in our Church always very properly suited to the *occasion*. And by my but observing the rules of the Church in these cases, I exercise two Vertues at once, I shew my
my

90 *Of the Service of God*

my Peaceableness, as well as my Devotion.

And accordingly at *Prayers* I never sit, but kneel, that being the lowliest posture, especially in these Countries, and I cannot carry my self too lowly when I speak to the great Majesty of Heaven and Earth, and that not only for others, for our Church and Nation, but for my self also, and for my own Eternal Salvation.

And though in all the prayers it is not required, nor suffer'd that I repeat them aloud, with, or after the Priest, as in the Confession and Lord's Prayer; yet I fail not to go along with him in my mind, and generally also to prevent the distraction of my thoughts, and to fasten and secure my attention, I even speak the words with my lips, yet so as not to be heard, for that would breed disturbance in the Church, which I always take care religiously to prevent. And to be sure I am
ready

ready always, at the end to answer, *Amen*, audibly; for I thereby keep my attention more awake by answering so often, and shew I join in all the Prayer that went before, and make it my own.

When any of the *Prayers* are read, I think it not enough for me to say my own *Private Prayers*, as they are taught to do in the Church of *Rome*, but take care to mind, and Pray earnestly for what the Prayer desireth; our service being for this end in our own Language, that every Man may understand, and join with the Priest. And I must not think that his Praying for me, or my being present, will suffice me, or do me good, unless I also really with him Pray for my self and others.

And what is here said of *Publick Prayers* for others, extends also to *Thanksgivings*, either for general Blessings, or for particular Mercies to particular persons commemorated, as to *Women when Churched*, or

92 *Of the Service of God*

Persons recover'd from sickness, &c.
For the same Charity that makes me so far to make others concerns my own, as to Pray for their good, will oblige me also to give Thanks to the God of all mercies, for all the Blessings and Benefits he hath bestowed on them.

As I omit no opportunity of going to Church, so nor of receiving the *Sacrament*; and yet I always take most religious care to prepare my self before I come to it. For the frequent Celebration of this Holy Office, is what the Church of Christ always practised, and our Church expects; And a constant use of it, and of preparation in order to it, I look on as a most prudent, if not necessary means, to counterballance the constant solicitations and temptations of Life. And by such a constancy I both honour, and obey God, and keep my own Devotion warm, and by the blessing of God, shall make Piety, and Good-

Goodness even customary and habitual to me, which is the greatest Blessing surely of which we are capable in this Life. I look on it indeed as the most holy Office of our Religion, and therefore of all things in this life dread being *Excommunicated*, or debarred from coming to it; *Excommunication*, when it proceeds on just grounds, being, as *Tertullian* calls it, an earnest or foretast of the last Judgment and Condemnation there; and therefore I take care neither by *Heresie*, *Schism*, *Profaneness*, nor yet by any contempt of Authority, or of the Ecclesiastical Courts, to have it pronounced against me; for to say no more, I think no wise man would willingly come under the suspicion of so great, and intolerable an evil, or have it on any account inflicted on him.

But tho' I look thus on the Sacrament as the most holy Office of our Religion, as a holy thing,

94 *Of the Service of God*

which Christ hath left to be remembered by, as it were to supply, and to make up the loss of his Bodily Presence, and to the due receiving of which Christ hath promised unvaluable Blessings, it being called by the name of his *Body and Bloud*, yet still I know it is but Bread and Wine, that there is no *Transubstantiation*, the very Body of Christ that hung on the Cross being in heaven and not here, it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body, that it should be in more places than one at the same time. And on this account I worship not the Sacrament, or what appears to my Eyes, but God and Christ in my mind: As I reckon not the Celebration of the Sacrament to be at all a Propitiatory Sacrifice, my hopes being only in the merits of that Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, which was once offered, as *St. Paul* says, to take away our sins, of which this is only a Commemoration.

I am constant also at all *Sermons* in my own Parish, and when I can conveniently, often at Sermons in other neighbouring Churches, when we have none in our own, and hope to receive good by them, they being part of the ordinary Means which God hath appointed for my Instruction, and therefore am very Attentive as to the Explication of that Word of God, by obeying of which I hope to be saved. But yet I never suffer the *Sermon*, or my Love to it, to juggle out, or under-value the *Prayers*, or the *Sacrament*, these being more properly the *Service of God*, and *Acts of Devotion*, than that. For Prayers, and Praises, and the Sacrament, are directed to God, have a direct relation to him; but Sermons are especially in reference to my self, and for my own Information, and therefore must yield to the other, as the Means are less noble than the End. Besides also, the Scriptures

E 3 being

96 *Of the Service of God*

being read have more Authority than a Sermon, and are more necessary, and should be minded accordingly. And it is the same thing to me, whether the Parson read his Sermon, or Preach without reading. Although I must needs say, there is hardly any one man in the world but will speak better, and more useful sense *premeditately*, than *ex tempore*, and tho' he that speaks *ex tempore* may speak with more heat, yet he that writes down what he says, is like to speak with more Consistency; and if we look on a Sermon to be any way in reference to God, surely it ought to be as Sensy and Consistent as we can frame it. And I reckon that every man that may be exceeding useful in the Church, hath not the same Presence of mind, fluency of Expressions, or grace of Delivery that another man hath; and there is scarcely any man but will speak, not only with more Consistency

sistency and weight, but also will be guilty of less Impertinencies and Improprieties, if he write down his Sermons, than if he do not: and I am taught to mind always the *Sense* of a Sermon, more than the *Noise* and *Tone* with which it is spoken, and I desire rather to have my Reason convinced, and Judgment informed, than my Passions and Affections raised by the most Eloquent and Pathetical harangue.

As to *Baptism*, I am taught the absolute necessity of it, where it can be had, we being by it admitted into the number of Christ's Disciples, made part of his Body, and have a share in all the Prayers for, and Blessings to his Church. And therefore I take a most religious care that my Children be Baptized as soon as conveniently they can. But I bring them to Church, and suffer them not to be Baptized at home, unless in case of utmost ex-

98 *Of the Service of God*

tremity. For as I think that Publick Service ought to be preferred before Private, so I think there is no Office, or part of Religious Service that more necessarily requires to be Publick, than this of Baptism, the Child being by it solemnly admitted into the Church of Christ, of which the whole Congregation are to be witnesses, and all their Prayers being desired in behalf of him. And when any one is *Baptized*, I both put my self in mind of my own Duty, as Christian; and examine my self how I have kept my Vow of Baptism; and how carefully I have performed my Promise and Duty toward those Children in whose name I have answered as Godfather; and also devoutly and heartily (as the Church teacheth) pray that this Child may have Grace to live some way agreeable to this holy Religion, into which he is now admitted.

I am glad also to assist at the *Catechizing* of Children, and think it no time lost to have the Fundamentals of our Religion repeated over in the Catechism. For it is by them that I, as well as the Children, can be saved. And I think it a mighty advantage to have the whole sum, and substance, not of one Text of Scripture, or of one point, but of all Scripture, and of whole Christianity delivered at once, as it is in the Catechism. And it will naturally put several things into my mind, which either I did not mind before, or had forgot. And so I shall also benefit my self as well as countenance Religion, and the Publick Service, and encourage the Children, and do them good.

I omit not to bring my own Children, or God-children, as soon as they are about 11 or 12 years old, to be *Confirmed* by the Bishop (having first taught them their Catechism, and the design of Confirmation).

100 *Of the Service of God*

tion) For by so doing, I obey the Church, shew my own Religious care, make some good impressions on the Childrens minds as to Religion, and put them in mind of their Vow of Baptism, and the necessity of their performing it, and I hope I get further a great deal of good for the Child. For the *Prayers* of one good man for another are very available; and therefore, much more those of Persons so highly Commisionated by God as our Bishops are, who not only *Pray* for, but also are empowered to *Bless* in God's name. And I have much Reason to hope that God will hearken to them, and grant what they *Pray* for, and make good, and fulfil what by their Blessing us in God's name, they give us ground to hope for.

When the *Banns* are published in the Church, or people are *Married*, I am so far from making it a matter of sport, as many do, that it stirs me up to pray for a Blessing from
 God

God on them; and it at the same time puts me in mind of my own Vow and Promise in Marriage, how I have performed it; and I make it also an occasion of a fresh engagement in my self to keep it strictly. For tho' I look not on *Matrimony* as a *Sacrament*, yet I look on it as the most solemn Engagement among men, and Sacred, as being a Vow made before God, and witnessed to before men, and in a case of the greatest moment in this Life: and therefore in all respects a proper occasion for seriousness and devotion.

When the *Sick* are mentioned in the Church to be Prayed for, I Pray for them heartily (as I would others should pray for me if I were in the like case) not absolutely that they should Recover, but if it be God's will, and if it will be most for God's Glory, and for their Good, that God will give them Patience and Thankfulness, and make

102 *Of the Service of God*

make both their Sicknes, and Death it self, when ever it shall happen, a real Blessing to them.

And I make use of these *Prayers for the Sick*, to be instances to my self of my own Mortality, and Arguments with my self to Prepare for Death, which I know is appointed for all men. And hence I go to *Visit* the Sick that are of my Acquaintance, both to Comfort them, and give them good Advice, and also to work upon my self; and I apply to my self what I say, or I hear others to say, to them, concerning their Sicknes and Death; and especially when I am Sick I send for the Parson of my Parish to assist me, and counsel me, to Pray for me, and Guide me, and to put me in mind of several things in order to my departure hence, which else I should forget. For always people need most advice in their own cases, especially when of so great Importance; for they are too apt to be
partial,

partial, and favourable to themselves. And hence I make no scruple to Confess, if not the Particularities, yet the general nature of my Sins, especially those of the deepest dye, and that lye hardest on my Conscience. For if I be in earnest to have such sins pardon'd, Religious Prudence will oblige me to take all possible care that I may thoroughly understand the state in which I am, and the danger of my Condition and my surest method in order to a Pardon and Cure; and all this I may best hope for from God's Minister, who both loves me, and is most likely to judge most unprejudicedly of me, hath a particular concern in me, and for me, and is by God impower'd, and enabled to assist and help me. For these and the like reasons, I think it not sufficient to be prayed for in the Church when I am Sick, but I desire frequently to be *Visited*, and not only to Examine my self, but also

104 *Of the Service of God*

also to submit to another's Examination and Direction, but still am sensible that it is my own repenting that is required in order to the pardon of my sins, else his *Absolution* will signifie nothing.

And all these parts of Religious Service I am so far from slighting or undervaluing, because they are prescribed, and we commanded to use these words, and no other, that I like them much the better. For as far as I can find, since Miracles ceased, there always was a *Form of Prayer* and Service prescribed, and it never was left to every Clergyman to say what Prayers, and use what Form of Service he pleased; much less was an *extempore Prayer* to God in Publick ever approved of. For besides the Indecency that will often be committed in Extemporary Prayers (which surely ought to be prevented if we can, when we address our selves to the Infinite Majesty

sty of Heaven and Earth in behalf of his Church, as well as on the concerns of our own Souls) It speaks respect to God, when we take all possible Care, that nothing but what is well weigh'd be offered to him. A prescribed Form also is the only way to keep up Uniformity among our selves. And seeing whatever is fit for us to ask in Publick, is known sufficiently, why should not the Expressions to be used on such occasions be defined also? If the matter be known, why should not the words? Besides that, it is an ease to my mind, when I know beforehand what I am to joyn in: And I confess there are very few Men, with whose *extempore* Prayers I would willingly joyn. In *extempore* Prayers also it is too often found, that he that Prays, will often more express and vent his own private thoughts, and passions, than the desires, and wants of his Congregation, and the Church; all which are things

106 *Of the Service of God*

things utterly to be avoided in all Religious offices.

And seeing a *Prescribed Form* in general, is on many Accounts thus expedient, or necessary in Publick: I think nothing can be objected against *our Liturgy*, either for the *matter*, or for the *Frame*, and *Composure* of it. For it is, for its *matter*, exactly agreeable to Scripture, and the Genius of our Religion; nothing pray'd for, or done, but what (as far as we can learn of his will by Scripture) is acceptable to that great God whom alone we serve, and pray to: And for the *Composure* of our Liturgy, it is in every thing such, as Publick devotions ought to be, and so exactly after the ancient pattern, fitted with Responses, Hymns, Prayers, Thanksgivings, Scriptures read, Sermons preach'd, Sacraments administred, and all other Occasional Religious Offices performed, that I cannot but admire it, and must profess my wonder

der and astonishment, that any persons should really either dislike, or slight it.

But I will not now stay to vindicate the several parts of it, from the Objections brought against it, but refer all Men to what the Judicious Mr. *Hooker* hath written on this Subject, in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*.

And though our Church hath not defined exactly, and commanded positively what shall be done by every particular Man on either the Feast, or Fast-days, yet seeing she hath set apart such days for those purposes, I think my self bound to have a particular respect to them.

And accordingly I make use of the *Feast-days*, not only in joyning with the Congregation in the Prayers appointed for that day, but also in thanking God in private for all Mercies, and particularly for the mercy commemorated, in serving God more that day than ordinary,
and

108 *Of the Service of God*

and endeavouring particularly by my Charity to do more good, and by a prudent demeanour of my self to encourage both Thankfulness in my self, Friendship in the World, and Piety towards God.

The *Fast-days* also I respect with some kind of denial of my self, as to my usual, and lawful liberty in Meat, and Drink; and this without affectation, or making a noise, or placing Religion in the kind of meat and drink. And Fasting being in Scripture prescribed, I cannot think it an improper method for the subduing of Sin in us. And seeing it is necessary, and supposed in Scripture, that we Fast sometimes, all Reason and Peaceableness, as well as Obedience will easily determine me to that time which the Church shall appoint. But still I take care that my Fasting neither put me out of humour, nor make me to be peevish, or conceited in my self, nor censure other men, lest I make my
good

good to be evil-spoken of, and so lose the benefit of it.

In short, I am strictly Regular according to the Rules of the Liturgy, and Command of the Church of *England* in her Canons, and I wish all men were even as I, and pity them that are not, and pray to God that they that are otherwise minded, may be convinced, and see their Errour. I thank God who hath given me so good an understanding in my duty, and hope by my steddiness and good temper to prevail with others. But yet I forbear judging or condemning all that do not exactly as I do, or that agree not with me in all these things, which though they are not Fundamentals, yet are such things as on which the flourishing of Religion, and the peace of the Church do very much depend. For I consider some great prejudices may lie on their minds which may in time be removed, that they may be in some
invo-

110 *Of the Service of God*

involuntary mistakes which may be corrected; and as I have an opportunity, and as becomes the nature of my place in the world, I will endeavour to correct. But still I do not so much attend to other Mens scruples, as to be by them deterred from my own duty; for our holy Religion professed in this Church, teacheth me to take care of my own Practice, but not rashly to condemn other men. For I can make more excuses for others, than I can for my self; and for *me* to be wanting in any part of Service, or Ceremony, I may justly think may be a greater fault, than for others, who perhaps know not, or mind not so much the Reason, and Consequence of being strictly regular. At least I am sure that their being guilty of a fault, will not excuse me, if I act the same, and every Man shall stand or fall to his own Master. And I am sure it more becomes an humble and private Christian to look after his

own Actions, than to be sharp in spying out, or severe in censuring the Carriage of others.

CHAP. V.

Of Additions to the Faith.

I Reckon the Doctrine taught and professed in this Church, and the Way and Method of Divine Service here used and practised, to be sufficient to Salvation; and that as there is nothing Com-manded that is unlawful, or superfluous, (the *Romanists* themselves condemning nothing that we teach as necessary, but owning it all to be fit and good;) so also I think there is nothing wanting, or deficient, that there is no necessary or useful Article of Faith that is not in this Church

Church expressly owned, no Duty towards God, or Man, that is not according to the Rules of this Church taught, and practised. And therefore whatever is further urg'd, as necessary to Salvation, or is required of me in order to Church-Communion, I cannot but think either false, or unnecessary. And on this ground I must disown the belief of the Infallibility of the Bishop or Church of Rome, or subjection to them, to be necessary in order to Church-Communion or Salvation: Though the *Romanists* press this as the first thing necessary. For as to the Pope's Infallibility, I cannot think that the good and wise God should either have appointed any one Man, or any set number of men, as an Infallible Judge, and Interpreter of his will, to whom we must attend, and obey, resigning up our Judgment and reason, and yet never tell us where this man, or number of men is to be found;

found; whereas surely this ought to have been of all things the most plainly, and frequently urged in Scripture; It ought to have been as visible there, as that *God is One*, or as that *Jesus is Christ*. Nay indeed methinks Scripture should have told us nothing else, but where to find this Infallible Judge, and how to obey him. For all other Precepts and Rules of Scripture, must certainly be some derogation to the Power and Authority of this Infallible Guide.

And seeing this Infallibility cannot be made out, nor shewn in whom it doth reside (for even they of the *Roman* Communion cannot agree where to place it: and all other Christians utterly disown it) How can it be a necessary Point in order to Salvation to submit to the Bishop of *Rome*, or receive, and practise whatever he tells us we ought to receive, and practise? For he may be mistaken, as well as other men;

men. And I think it is very evident, that unless it be on account of his Infallibility, we in *England* owe him no more obedience, or service, than we owe to any other good and Christian Bishop: Nor do we owe him so much respect, as we owe to our own Bishop; for it is certain that we belong not to his Temporal, nor to his Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction.

And till they of the Church of *Rome*, from their own Example shew us which is this Infallible Judge, and what use he is of, by putting an end to their own Divisions, and Controversies, I shall certainly conclude that they do not believe themselves when they say, He is somewhere among them. Or at least, if he be among them, he had as good not have been there, for he is of no use or benefit to them; much less can we believe it necessary to Salvation to own his Authority and Infallibility. Particularly let them
make

make the Council of *Trent* to be fully received in *France*, and its Authority own'd there (and yet if an Infallible Judge ever pretended to appear among them, it was in that Council which made a new Creed, and new Religion :) But we know the Authority of that Council is utterly disown'd in *France*, and nothing approved of as decreed by that Council. Let them, by the help of this Infallibility, end, and decide all the great and dividing Questions among their own Members ; Let them resolve, and satisfie the Quietists now at *Rome* it self, Determine the Disputes between, and Reconcile the Jesuits and Jansenists ; we shall not else think it is out of love to us, or to Truth, that they tell us of this Infallibility, but for some other, and bad Designs on us, at least I cannot see how they can expect that we should own and acknowledge it. For if they really had such an excellent thing among

F

them,

them, *I* do believe that they love themselves so well, that they would apply it to the Cure of their own miserable Dissentions and Divisions; and they will never perswade us they have it, till they first of all use it thus towards themselves.

And if it be not on pretence of Infallibility, that they reckon it necessary for us to be in Communion with the Bishop of *Rome*, *I* cannot see how they can on any other account plead it necessary that we should be subject to him. For *I* cannot think it possible that God should make obedience to any humane thing, to be the first thing necessary in order to Heaven, especially a humane Authority distinct from that Regal Authority, under which *I* was born, and to which *I* owe Subjection, according to both *St. Peter's* and *St. Paul's* Command; much less that all the world should be subject to one man, and much less yet that this should be, and yet God Almighty

mighty never tell us in Scripture where this Universal Monarch should reside. And yet they may talk what they will, it is not our Believing agreeably to true Christianity, and for the saving of our Souls, that they would have us submit to them, and own their *Infalibility*; it is not out of love to Truth, or to us, that they at all desire our Conversion, as they call it, but it is for the love of our money, and that they may domineer the more over our Estates, and Purfes, as well as our Consciences. And hence it is that the Conversion of *England* is at this day so little regarded and promoted at *Rome*. For the Pope and Cardinals are old men, and they say, that we being very obstinate, there is no hopes that any good should be done with us in their days; and if ever we should be Converted, we should bring no money to them, we shall not be fleeced in their times, and

F 2

they

they are not much concern'd for those that will come after them. They may spend money on us, to send, and maintain men to Convert us, but they shall receive no money from us. Thus they argue, and talk freely at *Rome*. And this is one, if not the main Reason, that the Pope and Cardinals are so backward, to press our Conversion, especially when they consider at the same time, that the men chiefly employed in our Conversion, are Jesuites, of whom even the Pope, and all the wise *Italians*, are both afraid, and ashamed. Nay indeed, they wonder at us, of all men in the World, that we should at all think of embracing that Religion, which they that know it best, and get most money by, are weary of, and going to throw off; almost all the Learned and Ingenious *Romans*, that care for any Religion, being *Quietists*, and consequently no Admirers of the exercise

eise of Religion according to present Popery. Thus the Wise *Italians* think and argue; and yet surely if there be *Infallibility* in the *Romish* Church, it is among them, and they are nearest to it. And if any here plead (as some I know have the impudence to do) that there are no *Divisions* at *Rome* concerning *Quietism*, they may as soon perswade that they are all *Virtuous* there, that there is no *Vice*, or that the Pope neither is, nor ever was there; and I will undertake to defend all this too as well as *Transubstantiation*. And if there happen such another Pope to succeed this Pope in his Enmity against the *Jesuits*, I see not why the *Jesuits* may not perswade the World that the true Pope is not at *Rome*, but at *Paris*, or where they please. For *Paris* is as often called the Seat of *St. Peter*, and the *Infallible Chair*, as *Rome* is called so in the New Testament; and I believe it is as evi-

dent from Ecclesiastical History that *St. Peter* sat 25 years Bishop in one City, as in the other.

And as thus I cannot believe either the *Infallibility* of the Bishop of *Rome* to be true, or subjection to him to be necessary to Salvation: So nor can I think the other Additions that he hath made to the Creed, to be parts of true Christianity, much less to be necessary to be believed.

All the Contradictions that a man can reckon up, perhaps, may be as Reconcilable, as the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. And the Christian Religion being by our Saviour, and the Apostles recommended to our Reason, it is not possible but they must give us leave to make use of our Reason in judging of the several parts of this Religion. For, tho' where we Contemplate on any thing that entrencheth on Infinity, we are sensible our Reason
is

is at a loss, and we submit to Revelation without more ado (for so if we Contemplate but on the *Extension* of the material World, whether it be Infinite, or no; or on the *Divisibility* of matter, whether it can be into Infinite parts or no; or of the *Ante* and *Post* duration of the World, or Time, whether it was possible for it to have a Beginning, or End, or no; whether there can be an Infinite Number, or no, &c.) In all these kinds of Questions, tho' only concerning Natural things, yet we must confess our Reason to be puzzled; and so what concerns the Attributes, and Nature of God, if there be any thing above our Reason taught us in Scripture, it is not the fault of Religion, but of our own Minds, and their Incapacity, that we do not comprehend it (it all concerns Infinity, which we are unable to comprehend, or treat of;) But that there should be such Difficulties,

and Contradictions in our Apprehensions of a thing so entirely liable to our Senses, as a piece of Bread is, one would not suspect.

Indeed if the Church of *Rome* had told us, there are an infinite number of parts of matter in that Bread, we might have yielded to them. But for them to tell us that there are an infinite number of Bodies of Men, and all six foot long, in a piece of Bread of an Inch long, and all this infinite number of Bodies in this one lump, to be but one Body whilst it is all together, and all these Millions of Bodies that are on earth, to be not different from, but the same with one another, and with that One Glorified Body that is in Heaven; That at the Consecration, that Body comes down from Heaven, tho' it stir not at all; That it is Eaten by every one that receives the Sacrament, and yet continues to be Eaten by thousands of others still; That it neither nourisheth

riseth as flesh, nor hath any property of Flesh according to themselves, for it may be eaten in *Lepe*, that it is real flesh, tho' no flesh appear, and that there is no Bread, tho' only Bread appear; that when it is mouldy, or eaten by Rats and Mice, that neither Bread nor Flesh is mouldy, or eaten by these Rats and Mice: All these, and innumerable more Contradictions are contained in this Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. Besides that this Doctrine, as taught in the Church of *Rome*, is contrary also to Scripture, which calls it Bread when it is eaten, 1 Cor. 11. *Let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread,* and in many other places.

But now if after all it should be true, that Christ should be in the Sacrament, as the Papists imagine; yet our Reason, and Senses so fully informing us the contrary, and our Saviour having no where bid

us lay aside our Reason or Sense in this case, but He himself even after his Resurrection appealing to the Reason and Sense of *St. Thomas* for the verity of his Flesh and Bones, we may be sure that he would excuse our Unbelief when we have so many Arguments against it, and nothing for it, but one single expression, which is undoubtedly Figurative as to the Cup, for he calls it *Cup*, instead of *Wine* in the Cup; and we may justly think it is so Figurative as to the *Bread*, when he calls it his *Body*. For the Eastern Nations, and especially the *Jews*, very much use such Figurative Expressions; and our Saviour elsewhere calls himself the *true Vine*, the *Way*, the *Door*, which no man certainly ever understood in a literal sense. But especially the Church of *Rome* so strictly requiring the highest Divine Honours to be paid to that which appears under the form of Bread
and

and Wine, We are infinitely the most safe in paying it no Divine Honours, because we have all the reason in the World to believe, it is nothing but Bread and Wine. And if it should be as the Papists suppose, we may be sure Christ would excuse us, if we Worship him, and Pray to him as in Heaven sitting at the right hand of God, tho' we take no notice of him here, where, according to themselves, he appears but at best *incognito*, and hath no where commanded to be Worshipped as Corporally present there: And God declares himself a *jealous* God as to his Worship; and therefore if he should not be there in Body, they cannot deny but they commit flat Idolatry. And yet the worshipping of the Host, as they call it, is of all things the most strictly enjoyn'd, and insisted on, as if there were no danger at all of giving God's Glory to another, and provoking his jealousy. And yet

yet according to the Papists themselves, the *Elevation of the Host*, and the *Worshipping of it* by the people, hath been but lately ordained in the Church of *Rome* itself; and it is not to this day practised in all the Eastern Churches, and the appointing a Feast for it, called the *Feast of God*, and the *Worshipping it*, when carried in Procession, or to a Sick person, is of a later date.

For the same Reason also I am very shy of using any *Image* in Divine Worship; For I cannot but think that Images were forbidden the *Jews* in the Second Commandment, and are forbidden us still. And tho' the Church of *Rome* pretends that they are Assistances to Devotion, I cannot but think them to be rather hindrances, and distractions. And that a man must be very sensual, and immersed in matter, whom an Image will assist in his Apprehensions of God, or
make

make to be more devoutly affected towards him. I am sure they are an insufferable offence to both *Jews* and *Turks*, and make them so averse to Christianity, that there is no hopes of Converting them. And yet no man can say that the Worship of them is at all necessary, and all must grant they may be intolerably abused, as we find by the Old Testament they were, and from the practice of the Heathen, both of old, and still. And tho^t the *Learned men* in the Church of *Rome* may have better Notions of things, yet it is to be feared that the *common people* do perform the same Worship to them, that the Heathen did to their Images. And if the Image only puts people in mind of the Person, why should the Image of the Virgin *Mary* at *Loretto* be more esteemed, than any other? For I cannot fancy it is more like the Virgin *Mary*, who certainly was no Blackamore. Therefore
by

by their running thus to one Image, rather than another, they must necessarily think, that there is some Holiness in the Images themselves, some Divine Vertue resident in them, which is the notion, in which the Heathens looked on, and worshipped their Images: And God himself hath said, He is a *Jealous God*, especially concerning Images, in the second Commandment, which the Church of *Rome* is so sensible of, that they suffer not their people to Read, or Learn that Commandment, lest they should boggle at the worship of Images.

Nor do I think much better of the Prayers which they make, and the worship they pay to Saints departed, though these are not Dead, and senseless, as the Images are. For the very praying to them at all times, in all places, and on all occasions, argues that they must own some kind of *Omni-science*, and *Omni-presence* in the Saints. For else how
can

can the Saints hear us, where-ever we are? And all Religious Prayer being a part of Divine Honour, we think it too much to be ascribed to a Creature, especially when they pray to a Saint, not only to *Pray* for them, but to *give* them all Blessings, Spiritual, and Temporal, for Protection from all Enemies, Ghostly, and Bodily, from all Evils at Sea, and Land: By so doing they ascribe a kind of *Omnipotency* to the Saint also.

And tho' they do grant, that the Saint gets these good things for them of God, yet they are beholden to the Saint, else they think, God would not have given them. And therefore tho' they own God to be the original Author, yet they look on the Saint, as the immediate Donor, to whom they are immediately, and especially obliged. And after all this, they cannot but grant, that there is no necessity of praying to a Saint. For they can as well, at
the

the same time pray to God himself, who, they are sure, hears them, and can help them, and who will be so far from taking it ill, that he expects to be pray'd to by us, and is called in the Scripture, *the God that heareth Prayer.*

But tho' God is so willing to be pray'd to by us, yet still there are some Prayers, which I cannot think that he is much pleas'd withall; And that is Prayers for the Dead, which are so constantly offer'd up, and make a considerable part of the Devotions of the Church of *Rome.* For whatever Instances are found in the Primitive Church of Prayers for the Dead, were only either Evidences of their Belief of the Souls living after Death, which they thought proper to inculcate, and by this means to Evidence in a Heathen World; or else were Arguments of their own abundant Charity, and of the Imperfect state as to Happiness, in which they sup-
posed

posed the Best men to be till the general-Resurrection; but it is evident, they had no knowledge of those Purgatory Pains, which are now the only occasion of the prayers for the Dead in the Church of *Rome*. And accordingly they pray'd only for the Best people, for such of whose salvation and happiness there was no doubt, as the Virgin *Mary*, and Apostles; which is directly contrary to the present Doctrine, and practice of the Church of *Rome*.

And tho' the Ancients, on some mistaken Notions, concerning the state of the Soul, did sometimes thus Pray for the Souls of good men, yet seldom or never for the Souls of bad men. Nor did they make that ill use of it, that is now made in the *Roman* Communion. For now in the Church of *Rome*, nothing is so easily secured, as Eternal Salvation, the Absolution of a Priest being sufficient for that.

There-

Therefore all that any man need fear, is only the Punishment of Purgatory; and to pray for their deliverance thence, is half the business of their surviving Friends, and the Purchase perhaps of half their Estates. But if the Justice of God would not pass by, or forgive this Temporal Punishment, as they call it, before the Person's Death, and whilst he might amend, and be made better by the use of the means of Grace, how can we think that God should pardon him now, seeing there is no hope of his growing better. I cannot indeed so much wonder that *the Church* now should be glad to have this Opinion prevail among the people; But I admire that *the people*, or indeed any that love Truth, should rely, or depend on it, especially seeing there is not one word in Scripture to encourage this Opinion, nor one Instance of Prayer for the Dead; not any supposition of any Fire in the
other

other World, but that which *never shall be quenched*; nothing but vehement Exhortations to *work while it is called to day, before the Night of Death comes, when no man can work*; altogether another kind of method of Salvation, than is now taught, and practised in the Church of Rome.

I might also insist on many other Articles, and shew them to be *Innovations, or Additions to the Faith, as of the seven Sacraments, Traditions, Sacrifice of the Mass, Communion in one kind, Indulgences, ascribing such vertue to Institutions of their own, viz. a Monastick Life, Holy Water, Crossing themselves, their Doctrine of Merit, and Supererogation, of the Pope's power to Depose Princes, absolve Subjects from their Allegiance, (which, I perswade my self, St. Peter would never have pretended to,) of the lawfulness of breaking their Faith with Hereticks; and especially, seeing they of the Church*

Church of *Rome* insist on these, as the very Foundation of Religion, and will promise you Salvation, if you do but own, and profess these, let your Life be what it will be, according to that saying of *Tertullian*, concerning the Hereticks of his time, *Nunquam facilius proficitur quam in castris Rebellium, ubi ipsum esse illic promoveri est.*

But of all the Points of Popery there have been so many, and so excellent Discourses of late written by the Clergy, especially in and about the City of *London*, that I need say no more, but refer my Reader to them.

CHAP. VI.

Of Civil Conversation.

THough the World be one of the Enemies which I am warned of in Scripture, and in my Baptism I renounce and promise to fight against, and though the ill customs and examples in it are too often a Snare to many: yet still I am taught in the Church of *England*, that I may lawfully, and ought to converse in it. For as it hath difficulties and temptations to Vice, so it gives also occasion to exercise our Vertues; and therefore is no more evil or dangerous than our life it self here, which is a state of trial, in which it is expected that we must do good and suffer hardship in order to an Eternal reward.

And

136 *Of Civil Conversation.*

And I cannot think that the wise and good God would, not only have sent us into the World, but also have made so many employments necessary and useful in order to our subsistence here, if it had been a sin to manage those employments, or to converse with those that do. Therefore *I* rest fully assured that what-ever employment is necessary, or useful in the World, is also lawful; and what-ever is lawful, may be lawfully managed by my self, or any other good Christian. *St. John* the Baptist, the Fore-runner of our Saviour, when the Publicans and Souldiers came to ask him what they should do, doth not bid them lay down their employments, as either unlawful, or unfit, or unsafe, but gives them good and useful Rules, fitted to their several cases, but suffers them still to continue in their employments: and yet those two employments seem as much to expose Men to temptations,

ons, and to have as much to be said against them as any. And we find the Apostles, and particularly Saint *Paul* in his Epistles, to give advice to Persons of all kind of conditions, and to prescribe Rules concerning the carriage and behaviour of *Husbands* and *Wives*, *Parents* and *Children*, *Masters* and *Servants*, *Magistrates* and *People* in Church and State, and both *Superior* and *Inferior*; which is to me an undeniable argument, that in every one of these Relations, one may live as becomes a good Christian.

And particularly as to Government and Magistracy, *I* am so far from thinking it unlawful, that *I* esteem it necessary, and look on it as one of the most Sacred things in the World; for it is of God's appointment, and on the maintaining of which, the good of Mankind doth much depend.

And of all kinds of Government *I* like Monarchy, it being a resemblance

138 *Of Civil Conversation.*

blance of the highest, and the best fitted for preventing Factions and Divisions, and for the more regular administration of affairs, and seems naturally to derive it self from Paternal Authority, or the power of Fathers over their Children; every Father of a Family, or Patriarch of old time, as *Adam, Seth, Noah, Sem, Abram, Jacob*, being a kind of King over their Children and Grand-children; and so the Name of Father is thought at length to have been changed into that of King, for so we find *Kings* in Scripture frequently called *Fathers*; And they are always supposed to have that same care and tenderness over their People, as a Father hath for his Children and Family; and accordingly may justly challenge the same kind of hearty love and service, and obedience from them.

And especially in this Countrey I hold my self bound, as far as I can, to support and maintain the
Monarchy,

Monarchy, in all the *just* and *ancient Rights* of it: for it is the form of Government that hath been always established and in use here, and is in the frame of our Laws and Constitutions so constantly respected, that it is a dreadful danger, as well as sin to endeavour any change or alteration of Government. And if there be any right on earth, surely *Monarchy* hath right with us, and hath at least as good a title to all its Powers, Rights and Privileges, as any of its Subjects can have to their Honours, Properties and Estates. And I think my self bound to do what I can, to maintain this *Monarchy* in its true Line and Succession; the *Monarchy* of *England* being always esteemed as truly an Hereditary and Successive a *Monarchy* as any in the world; the Crown descending from Fathers to Children, whether Males or Females, not liable to be disposed, alienated, or sold, nor depending

G

140 *Of Civil Conversation.*

pending on any election, or choice of the People; and according to this method our present King enjoys the Crown, who hath, as I believe, the truest and most ancient right to his Crowns that any King in the known parts of the World hath: for tho' the Succession hath had sometimes interruptions, and the Crown hath been violently seized on, yet still the right to Succession was then generally owned, and the interruptions were afterwards censur'd as Usurpations; and whatever irregularities there were sometimes for a while, yet at last the Stream did return into its true channel, and the Monarchy became so settled by the good providence of God, that as far as History can inform us, our present King is Heir both of the *Saxon*, *Norman* and *Scottish* Lines. And our Kings being both by the Laws of God, and also by the Laws of our Land, supposed to look on them-

themselves towards their Subjects, not as Masters towards their Slaves, but as Parents towards their Children, and to deal with them accordingly: I take care therefore also to pay him the same kind of true filial obedience, service and submission, as to a Parent, to Pray for him, and wish him well, to be tender of his Honour, and careful of his Good, neither to wrong him my self, nor suffer others to wrong him, as far as is in my power, to look on him as one set over us by God for good, and to respect him Conscientiously on this account: And this I look on as a better foundation for true Loyalty and Obedience, than *fear*. For that Prince that only designs to *terrifie* his Subjects and keep them in awe, hath but a very uncertain hold of his People.

And as thus Government is necessary in the world, and Monarchy is lawfully established among us, so for a man to have a share of this

142 *Of Civil Conversation.*

Government, and to be subservient to the Monarchy, is not only lawful, but for him to discharge it well, it is exceeding commendable; he thereby will purchase a blessing to himself from God, and be a publick blessing to the World. And I am not ashamed of the meanness of my place and rank whatever it is; for in every Government or Body of men that live together, there must needs be a great variety of Employments, some higher, some lower, some more, some less honourable, yet the meanest, if honest, are both useful for the good of the whole, and may be lawfully managed by a Christian. And tho' I will not thrust my self into another man's office and business, that being the certain cause of disorder and confusion, nor am I very forward to solicit or sue for any publick employment, for I consider the weight and moment of it, for which I must give an account both

to God and the Publick, and it is possible that by my having this place I may exclude another that will manage it better: yet when I am lawfully called or appointed to any place, I refuse it not, knowing that some body must have all these places, and tho' I am not so sure of my own *abilities*, yet I am as sure of my own *integrity* and desire to do good, as any can be; and I am sensible that *integrity* goes a great way towards the discharge of my trust: but I do not by reason of trouble or charge avoid any office even in my own Parish; for by every one of these I serve God, and my Neighbours, the Church and State, and a little pains or money laid out in so good a cause, is a great gain. If the place that I have be honourable or beneficial, I look not so much at the profit or honour of it, as at the trust reposed in me, and the opportunity that I have by it of doing good; and to stir up

144 *Of Civil Conversation.*

my self to a careful management of the trust I have, I consider that both God and Man will expect that whilst I am in this place, I should be more useful in the World than other men, or else my account will be sad at the last day. And this consideration will have another good effect on me, it will make me also more willing to leave or part with this place tho' very beneficial; to be sure, it will make me keep it no longer than I can with honour, and a safe and good Conscience.

And by my doing my Duty honestly and discreetly, tho' but in an inferiour place, perhaps I may stop a gap, by which mischief might come to the Publick; I may encourage my Inferiours, shame my Superiours, if they are remiss, and give a good example to all; and this is of manifold advantage to the Publick.

And so if I have any Vote or interest for the choice of a Member in Parliament, or any publick Minister

ster or Officer, or the disposal of any employment in which the Publick is concern'd, I do nothing for favour or friendship, I regard not any kind of Interest or obligation of my own; for I always think that regard is first to be had to the Publick and the good of it: and therefore I employ my pains and interest, for such as, I verily believe, are fittest for it in themselves, and will do most good to the Publick, both as to Church and State. For I hold it highly unreasonable that any kind of Publick Office or employment, should be bestowed as a reward for former Services or kindnesses to my self, for by such kind of transactions, I plainly sell the Publick to pay my own private debts and obligations.

Next to the publick, I reckon my self especially concerned for my own Family; that being so particularly committed to my charge, that I only am accountable for them.

146 *Of Civil Conversation.*

My Wife I not only take care of, but shew all respect and kindness to her, as to my best and dearest friend in the World ; for so by my marrying her, I took and own'd her ; and in the Church before God and the Congregation, I promised I would so carry my self towards her, and I can never expect the blessing of God, if I break a vow so solemnly made before God, and in so great a Case. And to put my self the more effectually in mind of this, I often read over the Office of Matrimony, to stir up my self to a strict observance of my Vow there, and to prevent my varying from it.

If I have a Father or Mother alive, I not only pay them all possible respect and observance, but give them all kind of aid and support that I am able, on every occasion, as being both commanded so to do by God, and also in gratitude for what they have done for me ; and further, as an engagement
on

on my own Children to shew the same duty to their Mother and me, when we shall be old.

To my Children I shew the same tenderness, as to my Wife, and give them, as I am able, such education and instruction, as may keep them strictly vertuous and Religious, and make them useful to the World, as well as dutiful, and comforts to my Wife and my self. And I take care so to bring them up, and place them in order to their future subsistence, that they may have some honest and industrious way of employing their time, and maintaining themselves: Especial regard being had to such a way of living, as, I think, will be best for their Souls good. For I am not at all solicitous to leave them a great Estate, but only such a Portion as shall be an assistance and encouragement to their vertue, to their diligence, and industry; but not a maintenance for their vanity, and an incentive to their

148 *Of Civil Conversation.*

Luxury; for that may be a Snare, rather than a Blessing to them.

If I have Brothers and Sisters, though living far distant from me, yet I have a very particular concern for them, as being naturally parts of the same Family with myself, and are therefore in an especial manner the objects of my love, and of my care, and though I have no direct authority over them, yet I must never be wanting in good advice and admonition to them; and yet to all People of a good temper, advice and counsel, will go as far as commands or threatnings, especially if it be given with that tenderness and affection, which is due to persons so nearly related to me.

My Servants I treat with such gentleness and kindness, as may make them thankful to God, chearful in their condition, as well as willingly serviceable and faithful to me. For I look on them as Brethren, both by nature, and the Gospel,

spel, and that we are all Servants alike to the great Lord of all, and there is no respect of Persons with him. And he having committed these Servants to my trust, I not only take care for their food and comfortable subsistence here, but especially for their instruction, and the good of their Souls hereafter. And therefore I not only frequently in discourse teach them their duty to God, and exhort them to the practice of it, but also I take notice how they come to the Publick Service, especially on Sundays, and Family-prayers every day, and always allot them some time every day, at least a quarter of an Hour, Morning and Evening, for their private Devotions, which I teach them to use out of the *Whole Duty of Man*, or *Dr. Patrick's Devotions*; And I reckon it a great fault in Masters or Mistresses, to be too hurry, and perpetually to employ their Servants, as not to allow them any time.

time for the Service of God in private. But then this time that I thus allow them for their private Devotions, I make as sure as I can that they thus spend it, and not in idleness, or talk with one another.

To all my Family in general, I make my self as easie as I can, being not difficult to be pleased, and ready to forgive any slight neglect or fault: for I am sensible of my own infirmities and faults, especially against God; on the consideration of which only, I think my self bound to be mild towards others offending me; their offences against me, being against fewer and lesser obligations, than mine are against God, and I praying to God so often every day only to *forgive me my trespasses, as I forgive them that trespass against me.*

As I contract not friendship or extraordinary familiarity with any bad man, or ill affected to Church or State, both for the sake of my own reputation, and my own safe-

ty (an intimate acquaintance with a bad man, reflecting always on his Companions, and Vice being always very infectious): so when I do chuse a Friend, and profess any kindness extraordinary, I am not only real and sincere in my friendship without design or tricks, but make it a part of my study and business, that my friend may be the better for me. If I see any thing fit for him to do, I put him in mind of it, and advise him friendly; if I see him do any thing amiss, I admonish him also, and as kindly reprove him, which is no other than what I would have him do to me: If I can assist him in any business, I do it willingly and readily, and am not sparing of my trouble or ordinary charge for him; I reckoning it as one of the worst properties of men, who sometimes so love their own ease, that they will not so much as stir out of their Seat, to do another the greatest kindness. And though I am thus
ready

152 *Of Civil Conversation.*

ready to help and assist my Friend, yet I take care always to perform more than I promise, or put him in hopes of, or to promise less than I design to perform: for I consider the way of the World and temper of men, that their hopes and expectations do generally out-run their reasons; what they have but the least encouragement given to hope for, they in their thoughts make themselves sure of; and therefore by my doing more than I say for my Friend, or promising less than I intend, I both provide against disappointment which may possibly happen, keep him more at ease and rest, and yet shew my friendship to him as much. And the carriage which I have thus expressed, I use towards my Friends, or such as I choose out of the World, for a more intimate familiarity; I use it also towards my *Kinsfolk* and *Relations*, whom God hath as it were recommended to my Friendship and

Ac-

Of Civil Conversation. 153

Acquaintance, by making them so by nature allied to me.

Towards all my Neighbours, that live in the same Parish or Town with me, of what rank or quality soever they are, and indeed to all that are not only Christians in general, but Members of the same Church and Nation with my self, I take care to discharge all the Offices of *Justice, Charity and Kindness*, that the Gospel requires of one man to another. And accordingly I not only do them no wrong, by taking from them by stealth or oppression, by cheating or over-reaching, by slander or backbiting; but I am strict to give them whatever by any kind of right belongs to them. Hence I make as much conscience to pay my debts, or what I justly owe to another, as I do, not to rob him, or steal from him. As to Charity, I content not my self with giving only what I am rated, and so forced to pay to the Poor; but
give

154 *Of Civil Conversation.*

give also considerably as a free-will Offering of my own, according as I find any more than ordinary pressing occasion, (and such will seldom be wanting long to a Man that converseth in the World, and hath a mind to do good) and although the measure of Charity is not defined in Scripture, yet I consider that the *Jews* were obliged to give near a fifth part of their yearly income to the Priests and Levites, and the poor: And I am sure that the general fault of Men, is, that they give too little, and therefore I will go a step further than ordinary; and scarcely any Man gives enough, that doth only give what is perfectly superfluous to him, what he doth not at all feel; and therefore I can scarcely think I give as much as I ought, unless I do at least somewhat abridge my self by my Charity. By such rules as these I govern my Charity, and by such Motives and Considerations, I stir up my self to it.

And

Of Civil Conversation. 155

And though only a few perhaps need my *Charity*, yet I may and do exercise *Kindness* towards all, the Apostle commanding us not only to be *just* and *charitable*, but to be *pitiful* and *courteous*; to be far from the temper and practice of some, who love to provoke and inflame; for I esteem it my duty, as far as I can, to be civil and obliging to all, according to the Apostle's advice, for every man to *please his Brother to edification*: For this not only renders Mens lives more happy in themselves, but also conduceth much to the peace of the World: And when men are in good temper, they are better prepared, & more easily won over to any good, and not so liable to any Temptations of the Devil.

To all men, and on all occasions, I practise sincerity, and hate deceit, and tho' I know it not necessary for me to tell every man all that I know or think; yet I will never tell any man contrary to what I know,

156 *Of Civil Conversation.*

know, or think: for I reckon that falseness and deceitfulness is the last thing to be pardon'd by God or man; and they that deceive others, it is just with God that they be deceived themselves, and it seldom fails, but that God takes such people in their own craftiness.

Tho' I know that our Law doth allow Suits for small things, and that if a man will, he may be troublesome to his Neighbours on many occasions which will dayly happen, and which are perhaps just provocations, at least according to the custom of the world; yet I reckon my self bound to bear with many things, and not to take every advantage against my Neighbour, which the Law may bear me out in: for I am sensible that Humane Laws do allow of many things that are not very becoming of a Christian. Nay, even if I be defamed and spoken ill of (tho' nothing is dearer to a man than his
repu-

reputation) if I know my self innocent, I will take all prudent and Christian ways to clear my self; yet I will not let every passionate expression against me, be the occasion of quarrel, but rather pity the infirmities of humane nature, than highly resent such misunderstandings and offences that are taken, tho' unjustly, at me. And I am sure that by my thus bearing patiently an unjust aspersion, I shall not only please God, but also win even on my enemies, who assuredly will see their error; and so according to *Rom. 12.* *I shall overcome evil with good.*

What *Estate* I have, I always reckon that it is not given me only for my own use, and to enjoy my self with, but especially to do good on private and publick occasions. And therefore, as on this consideration, I must not spend it all on my self, so also in *prudence* (tho' I abhor covetousness as much

158 *Of Civil Conversation.*

as prodigality, yet) I reckon I ought to live always below my income, tho' not niggardly, and so I make some provision and allowance for extraordinary cases and charges, that will frequently happen. And in order to my full content of mind, and to prevent my using any unjust or unfit ways of enriching my self; in the first place, I make it my business so to regulate my passions as not to *desire*, and my way of living in the world, as not to *want* a great Estate or large Income: and then I have reason to hope, that if God should give me more, I should be both more moderate in the use of it, and employ it better than else I should do. And however scanty my fortune, or mean my station in the world is, (if I am not sinfully accessory to the bringing of my self into this condition) I am not at all ashamed of it, for poverty is no fault or occasion of shame, but I reckon that I may both
be

be in the favour of God, and also benefit the world, if I discharge it honestly, and discreetly. But the more I receive from God, I always reflect how much more thankful to God, better in my self, and useful in the world, ought I to be than other men: and whether my Estate increase or decrease, or be more or less (unless by my own fault) I have always this consideration before my eyes, that the less I have, the less I must certainly give an account of, and this I am sure is the truest ground of contentment in every condition. As to the employment of my *Time*; I reckon it a great part of Prudence, and much conducing to the happiness of life, so to accustom my self, that I may always have somewhat to do, that I may have some way of spending my time by my self, with usefulness and satisfaction.

And I not being obliged and forced to work all day long, as day-labou-

160 *Of Civil Conversation.*

labourers, and many Farmers and Artificers are, but having some time to spare, from the exercise of Devotion in publick or private, the business of my calling, and the charitable offices that I have mentioned already; I take care to employ it as well and usefully as I can for others and my self, Time being a Talent which God hath intrusted us with, and for the spending of which we must one day be called to a strict account. And besides this Religious consideration, I reckon it is one of the most miserable and unhappy conditions in the world, for a man to live so, as that his time is a burden to him; and yet it is the want of having some useful and handsome way of employing his time, that makes a Gentleman sometimes the most miserable creature in the world, and the only useless part of God's Creation. If the time of year, or weather, or his health be such that he cannot

cannot Hawk or Hunt, he is undone, and therefore is almost forc'd to the pitiful shift of Drinking, to pass away time, tho' to the loss of his Time, the *abuse of his Reason*, and the prejudice of his *Health*, and Estate. Now that I may never be at such a sad loss, as that my Time should hang on my hands, but that I may be able to spend a rainy day at home Soberly and to Satisfaction; And tho' I make no part of Learning my Trade or Business: yet I inure my self to some kind of study, as being sensible that all Knowledge and Learning, is the improving of a man's mind, is a very proper imployment for a man's time, and will generally be of real use and advantage in Life.

And first, a Knowledge of our *Religion*, both as Christian in general, and as it stands distinguished from other kinds of Christian Religion in the world; is very necessary. For seeing the Salvation
of

162 *Of Civil Conversation.*

of my Soul depends on it, surely I may well allow it some share of my time and study. And true Religion being the will of God, it every way deserves my thought and contemplation; and by my understanding my own Religion well, I shall by the blessing of God, keep myself more steddily from being seduced into any ill opinion or practice.

After Religion, the *Laws* of our own Country ought to be known and studied by me, and every man. For I shall often have occasion for a knowledge in the Laws. If I be a Justice of Peace, or if I be a High-Constable, Petty-Constable, or in any Office, Civil or Military; or if I be but empannel'd on a Jury, a competent knowledge in the Law is necessary: that I may understand how far my power goes, what my place or office allows, or requires, what is expected of me, and what not; and this cannot be thoroughly known without reading and studying

ing the Law. Besides by a little^e knowledge of the Laws I shall b^e able perhaps sometimes to make up and compose differences among my Neighbours, prevent Suits at Law, and consequently the ruine of Families, and breach of Friendship.

Besides these parts of Learning which are so necessary, I exercise my self in others, which I esteem proper diversions, commendable accomplishments, and which have their uses also in life: such as are *History* and *Chronology*, both of the World in general, and also of our own and neighbour Nations in particular; together with the *description* and *Geography* of them. For some knowledge of this kind is necessary even in order to discourse, and for the understanding but the common news and relations of transactions in the world. There is no part of those Sciences which they call *Mathematical*, but is both useful and pleasant, improving
H and

164 *Of Civil Conversation.*

and fining a Man's Reason, and serving to many occasions of Life; such as are *Geometry, Arithmetick, Astronomy, Navigation, Surveying, Architecture, Fortification, Art-Military*, all *Natural and Experimental Philosophy*. And besides these, by a man's understanding the *Anatomy* of his own body, by his having some knowledge of *Herbs*, some skill in the general grounds of *Physick*; he may be sometimes helpful to his poor Neighbour, when a Physician is not near, and may be able at least to pass a better judgment on his own, or his Childrens and Families distemper. These and other very useful parts of Learning there are sufficient to take up a man's Life, and there are good Books of all these Sciences in the *English Tongue*, and easie to be had, and which I can either learn by my self, or else with the direction and assistance of the Parson of my Parish,

rish, or some other Learned Neighbour. And I cannot but reckon that man very stupid, that hath such a field of Knowledge before him, and yet knows not how to spend his time, and tho' I should perhaps have no great edge to any of these parts of Learning at first, yet let me but try them a while, and I shall certainly find them the greatest diversion, and the most pleasant way of passing time that can be; and such a connexion is there among them, that if I do but mind any one Science or part of Learning with an appetite, I shall insensibly be drawn on to others, and find them necessary. And all these Sciences have both the *general* uses, to inform our ignorance, and prevent our being deceived and imposed on, to refine and improve our reason, to satisfy and enlarge our minds, and fit us for Discourse and Conversation; and also their *particular* uses, as ap-

166 *Of Civil Conversation.*

ply'd to the several cases of Life to which they relate. And my having these so innocent and commendable ways of spending my time, will besides, have many advantages; it will keep my mind busie and employ'd, and even make me contented; I shall not have that uneasiness of mind, that an idle man hath, nor fall into those temptations to which idleness exposeth men. I shall be some way useful to my Neighbour and the World, adorn and cultivate my mind, and thereby set my self so much the farther above the Beasts, avoid many of those Errours and Absurdities, to which want of knowledge in these Sciences often betrays men; I shall hereby be more fitted for any kind of Publick Employment, Civil or Military: And I think it may go for a rule, That there is no part of good Learning, but a Man will sometime have occasion for, and find

find useful, let his Employment or Quality be whatever it will.

But besides this way of employing of time in Reading and Study, it is confessed, that it will be necessary also, for a Man to be sometimes in *Company*, when he visits, or is visited, or is obliged to meet other Men on any publick or private affair or business. And tho' these meetings do too often become a Snare, and draw Men into excess of Wine, Passion, &c. which therefore as we are Christians, and have Souls to be saved, we must watch against: Yet it cannot be denied, but that as being in company, and conversing with others, is necessary in the World, so it hath great and manifold advantages; It softens Mens tempers, and makes them pliable, it reduceth the rules of Religion and Prudence into act, it cures the mind of that sowness or conceitedness, to which a very retired and Monkish person is too

168 *Of Civil Conversation.*

much exposed; acquaintance and friendship is kept up by it, both private and publick affairs are concerted, and much good done many ways. But then I take care what I can, to prevent or avoid the evils, into which keeping company often draws men. And therefore if I hear a rash word spoken, though against my self, I do not presently blow it up into a quarrel, but prudently pass it by, as supposing it is not the settled thoughts of his mind that spake it; I examine my self, what occasion I have given for such speeches; if I find I have done any thing amiss, I modestly own it; and if I have wronged him, I am not ashamed to acknowledge it, and beg his pardon: But if I find I am innocent, I doubt not but that he will in a short time see his error, and be ashamed of himself, and therefore he need not be severely rebuked by me. I believe not easily ill stories told of others, nor love

to hear them, nor incourage the tellers of them; what Mens company I do not like, I neither publicly affront them, nor complain of them, but either bear it patiently (if it be such a company, as I am obliged to be in) and so it will teach and inure me to get a conquest over my passions, or else I wholly abstain from it, but even this I do without making a noise, or being taken notice of, as avoiding such a Man's company.

If I hear swearing or profaneness, obscenity or backbiting, I take the liberty some way or other to shew my dislike of it; if before my Superiours, with a religious modesty; if among my equals, with freedom; if among my Inferiours, with some kind of Authority. For all profane and obscene discourse, and reflecting on others, is really an affront and wrong to every Man; For every Man hath a right in *Religion* and *good manners*, and ought to see

H. 4. them.

170 *Of Civil Conversation.*

them vindicated. And as a Man should not suffer his Friend or Relation to be abused and spoken ill of unjustly, without some way appearing in his defence: So ought every Man to endeavour to vindicate Religion and good manners, according to the nature of the place in which he is, and the company with which he doth converse.

On this ground also I make it part of my business, when I am in company, as often as I have opportunity, to prevent misunderstandings, and to compose differences among men; And whatever I hear that may provoke Men against one another, I never divulge, but endeavour by all means to suppress, and so hope for the blessing of a Peace-maker, *Matt. 5.* I always make the best of, and put the most candid interpretation that I can, on what is done or said, hereby to keep People at peace, and to encourage good actions in the World. And
the

the more silently and secretly I do this, or any thing of the like nature, I esteem it is always the best; for the less it is observed, it will always do the more good, and will also be as sure or surer of a full reward.

And though I confess I seldom play at any game, yet when a Man is in Company, to please a friend, and to avoid drinking, and speaking ill of their Neighbours, or the publick, I cannot but allow of playing at some innocent Game or Recreation: but still whatever lawful Recreation I use, or Game I play at, I observe such Rules as these, *First*, Never to let it take up either the most, or the best, but only the refuse of my time, and the intervals of business and seriousness. 2. Never to spend on recreations, or to venture the losing so much, but what I can well afford, and may lawfully lay out on my own diversion, without streightning;

172 *Of Civil Conversation.*

my estate, or abridging my charity (for my Charity must not be the less, but the more liberal, for what I spend in recreations: For if I can afford to *throw away* so much, it is always supposed that I can *give* more.) 3. Never to suffer my self to be put in passion, or out of humour at my losses, or disappointments in these diversions, and therefore never to design gain or profit, but health and recreation in them. And then I think there is no lawful Diversion, but may be safely used some times, if I use it not too often, so as to make it my business and employment, and if I always observe a *Decorum*, to do nothing, though lawful in it self, at an improper time, or which is not fit for my age, place, and station. For that may be fit for another, that is not fit for me; and I am so far from the common custom of the World, of censuring others for what they commit themselves,

selves, that I can very patiently bear with many things in another, which I will not take the liberty to do my self; for I can lawfully and commendably abridge my own liberty, but I cannot so well impose on, or charge, or censure others: There may be more excuses made for others than for me; and therefore in all doubtful cases, I choose rather to confine my self, than other men.

And by my thus managing my self in these little and common cases, I shall not only keep my Conscience clear, and live inoffensively before God and men, but shall also contribute to the keeping up Peace, and friendship, and good correspondence among Men, Members of the same Church and Nation: For I direct all my actions, as far as I can, to the publick good, and I always wish that the publick may flourish rather than my self, and wish that another may have this

174 *Of Civil Conversation.*

or that place or employment, rather than my self, if he will manage it better, and be more useful to the publick. And from this Principle also, I will even venture or part with all, to do real service to the publick, and am neither covetous nor timorous, wherever the good of the Publick is concerned. And however in a matter of a *private* concernment, I may yield up my own rights to please others; Yet in what the good of the *publick*, either as to Church or State is concerned in, I will by no means recede from my just rights, out of any kind of fear or complaisance; for in so doing I should rob Posterity, I should rob not only my self, but all that I love most, and that depend on me, and betray my trust, and lay a foundation for a publick mischief and ruine; and to be sure God will require such injustice severely at my hands.

C H A P. VII.

*An earnest perswasive to
continue in the Church
of England.*

Such is my Belief, and such is my practice and carriage, according to the Doctrine and Commands of the Church of *England*; and therefore I think a man but little understands Christianity, or hath not any peaceable inclinations, that finds fault with it, and that doth on any account separate from it.

For first, it is *the Church*, which is by all kind of Lawful Authority *Setled and Established* in our
Na-

176. *A Perswasive to continue*

Nations. And therefore if there be any obedience due to any Commands of Governours in Church or State, Communion with the Church *established* here, is a duty; unless a man can shew any expresse Commands of God to the contrary, which a man will be so far from finding in Scripture, that he will find much there to oblige him to continue in it. For where ever Government in general is established, and obedience to Governours enjoined, it ought to be reckoned as spoken of our Government or Governours Ecclesiastical and Civil, as well as of any other in the world.

But we are not only obliged to communicate with the Church, because it is Established among us, but because we see it hath all right to be Established, as being so agreeable to Scripture, the Practice of all Antiquity, especially the first and purest, is so well fitted to
answer

answer the very end, and design of a Church, and pursues those ends so fully, as well as that it hath had a constant immemorial prescription among us. For at the Reformation, we did not begin anew to frame and form our Church, but kept the essentials of a Church which we found established, and only corrected those Errors, and reformed those Abuses which had by degrees and length of time, or especially by the prevalency of the Bishop of *Rome* and his Agents, crept in among us. For as we were not Converted at first from *Rome*, so nor did we at first receive such a Christianity as is now taught and practised at *Rome*, but such as is now established in our Church. Nay we can shew that we were a settled Church before they came among us. They indeed brought a great many bad things among us, which we at last threw out; and in our Reformation we departed from
them

them only in what they had departed from the True Church of Christ, and from themselves in the first Ages, as our Canons speak.

So that our Reformation was neither a *Schism*, nor doth it countenance any *Schismaticks*, or excuse any Separation from our selves. For we can shew that all that are born in these Countreys are more under the Ecclesiastical Government of these Countreys, and more bound to Communicate with us, than we are under the Bishop of *Rome*, or bound to Communicate with him: And they can never shew the like reasons and grounds of their separating, or dissenting from us in Doctrine or Discipline, as we can for our Believing and acting otherwise than the Bishop of *Rome* doth. So that if any People, Born and Baptized in any Church under Heaven, have a duty incumbent on them, and ought to continue in that Church, I am sure

in the Church of England. 179

we in *England* have at least so much as they have, or more. So that either there is no necessity of continuing in any Church in which men are Born and Baptized, or there is a necessity for us to continue in our Church.

Indeed we confess our case is on many accounts very hard, by reason of the several Adversaries that we have on either hand; but yet even this seems somewhat to speak for us, our Church being in this, like Virtue it self; which consists in a mean, between two extreams; or as King *Charles* the Martyr expressed it, like our Blessed Saviour who was Crucified between two Thieves. For such, and so different are our Adversaries, that whatever we do, we are sure to be blam'd and accused by one side or other. But as Mr. *Hooker*, Dr. *Falkner* and others, have abundantly made out the *Lawfulness* of all our Institutions, so he that considers
what

what opposition is made against us on every side, and what provision we must make against objections, tho' of different and contrary natures, will see the *prudence*, and even *necessity* of whatever is enjoined among us. So it is confessed that by our retaining the *Episcopal Government* in our Church we anger some; and yet if we had omitted or rejected it, we had more injured our selves, and our causes, and more justly offended others.

By our insisting so strictly on our *Ordinations*, we are liable to complaints from some: and yet if we did neglect and not insist on them, we should subject our selves to juster accusations. Our having a *Liturgy*, displeaseth some; but if we had not had a *Liturgy*, we should have anger'd more, and injured Religion. If we enjoin any thing, if it be but a *rite or ceremony* in the Service of God; some blame us; and yet if we should enjoin nothing,
but

but leave all at liberty to do what they would, nothing could follow but Confusion.

The Ceremony of the *Sign of the Cross*, some blame us for using it so much, others blame us for using it no more: So that all men must needs see that it is impossible for us to live without offence. Our wisest course therefore surely must be, next to consulting what is necessary for Religion, for us so to order things as to displease least, or seeing we cannot please all, yet to please some; especially those who seem to have more of reason on their side. And this is the rule which I think we have exactly followed. For there is nothing in our Constitution, against which exceptions are taken by any, but what we have, out of Christian Charity and Condescension, retained or enjoyn'd, as far as we can, and as Christianity allows to satisfy and please some others of our scrupulous

lous Brethren. And I know no one thing tho' the most plausibly argued against by some, but would have been liable to greater objections if we had not ordered it so. And therefore, I verily believe there is no man that considers our case, puts himself in our place, and weigheth impartially Truth according to Scripture and Antiquity, and that would withal take care to provide against, and to avoid all the objections that this or that party of men makes against us, but will see a plain necessity for our enjoying and acting in every case as we do.

I am not therefore startled to see some on all sides to oppose us, for I am sensible that if we acted otherwise than we do, we should render our selves liable to greater opposition and contradiction on one hand or other. So for instance, if we used and insisted on more Ceremonies, our other Dissenters would think they had more just
reason

in the Church of England. 183

reason to complain: if we used not so many, the Church of *Rome* would have greater advantage against us. Besides I consider, that nothing can be enjoyn'd, much less can a whole frame of things be laid, but that some people may take offence at it, and objections may be raised against it. Therefore the Rule that we go by in our Church is this, *First*, we take care that nothing necessary be omitted, nor any thing untrue be taught, or unlawful be enjoyned, but that the whole frame of things may be so contrived, as shall conduce most to the advancement of True Devotion, and the rational and decent Service of God, Governing our selves all along by the Scripture, expounded especially by ancient practice; for we would not have it said that we are such a number of men as never were in the world before, but that we are such, and so Constituted, as we are confident the Primitive Martyrs and
holy

184 *A Perswasive to continue*

holy men of old, would have joyned in Communion with, we living by such kind of rules as they themselves practised. And *then* in the next place we consult what will displease others least, or be least liable to mistakes and objections, for we comply with either side as far as we can without forfeiting truth, or laying our selves open to a just reproof and accusation. And accordingly it is observable that some things we have abrogated, that were formerly practised by us, others we have changed and altered, and some thing we have recalled and revived, which was formerly omitted, and all this as we designed to gain the more, and do the more good; tho' so uncharitable have our Adversaries been, as even to charge this on us as a fault, and put a bad interpretation on this our so Christian Condescension.

On several other such accounts do we justly think our Church very
hardly

hardly used. It is generally very affecting to complain, and people naturally pity them that suffer, whatever the occasion is, especially it is popular to complain of what is established; it goes with many for a sign of Courage and of Conscience, for a man to find fault with the Publick. Now the Church of *England* being by Law Established, it can never want enemies for that very reason. If it be the Established Religion, it must have Laws for its fence and security. These Laws must have some kind of Penalties to inforce them, or else they signifie nothing. If these penalties are inflicted, it affords matter of complaint and clamour; if they are not inflicted, yet they serve as well for men to complain of the severity of the Laws against them, and so they are great gainers by these Laws. For it is popular to plead Persecution, as well as advantageous not to suffer by it.

Nay,

Nay, our Adversaries gain Reputation against us sometimes by their suffering, though the most justly. For if they suffer for Sedition, or Treason against the State, They will give out, that they suffer for *their* own Religion, and by *our* Religion; and this is often sufficient to create pity towards themselves, and incense men against the Church.

I mention all this, that Men may see the common grounds of clamour against the Church, and may not be surpris'd at it, nor transported against the Church, by reason of it. For you see, whilst it is the established Religion (which I hope in God it will for ever be) it will and must be expos'd to such kind of difficulties and objections, which every man must learn to consider, and endeavour to prepare and fortifie himself and others against. For indeed it hath no other objections lying against it, than will lie against
the

the best frame of things in the World, if established and made the National Religion. Of the best thing in the World, men may say, *it doth not please them, they do not like it*; but that ought not to go for an objection, unless they show their reasons of dislike; and I think that all the reasons of dislike which have been urged hitherto, our Clergy have so fully answered, as to be sufficient to take away all scruples out of the mind of rational and unprejudiced Men. Some other Objections have long lain on us, especially that of our inclinableness to Popery, and that we wanted only an opportunity to shew our selves, and to bring it in. A few years ago it was both in Sermons and printed Pamphlets daily thus prophesied concerning us; but I hope that all Men now see how little truth there is in this, and that the Clergy of *England* are no friends to Popery. And yet if we
I consult

consult the beginnings of Separation among us, we shall find, that the fear of our Clergies designing to bring in Popery, was the Principal occasion and motive to Separation from us. And indeed whilst those fears lasted, there was some little ground for what they did, if their fears were real, (though still they ought to have examined our Principles, and not to have judged so severely of us by way of Prophecy) But now I must needs say, I think they are bound in Conscience to return to us, the very Foundation of their dissenting and separation being taken away, or else they seem unexcusable before God. For surely no conviction can be greater than this, which hath now been given of the Church of *England's* being no favourer of Popery. And I hope in God, that seeing the main Objection is removed, they will have more of the peaceable Christian in them, than to study
for

for new Arguments to justify their Separation.

And on occasion of this Objection, that lay so long against us, I must for God's sake beg of all men to take heed, especially of this kind of Prophetical Objections, that we *will be, or we would be so or so, of this or that Party*, if we had an opportunity; for this is an Objection that is easily made, and yet is scarcely possible to be answered, and therefore is on all accounts the most unchristian and worst kind of slanders. Indeed in reference to *Papery*, it hath pleased God in his wisdom and goodness to give us a full occasion and opportunity to shew and clear our selves, and to evidence the falseness of that accusation. But now if we should be accused of being secretly *Jews, Socinians, Mahometans*, or the like, what possibility is there of our sufficiently clearing our selves, unless they would that God should bring

us into the same kind of Tryals as to those Religions. But I see not what occasion there is for men to be put to *Propheſie* concerning us. The Doctrine of the Church of *England*, is as legible, and as easily understood as that of any other Church in the *World*. Every man ſees what opinions the Clergy are of, for they ſubſcribe and aſſent to the Book of *Articles*, and *Homilies*, and to the Book of *Common-Prayer* ; many have alſo ſome regard to the *Articles* of *Anno 1640*. They take the Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy*, and the *Teſt*, renouncing *Transubſtantiation*, and other bad doctrines and practices of *Popery*, and give all the Security that one man can give another, of their reality and ſincerity as to what they profeſs. And now for men to ſay, notwithstanding all this, that they are ſecretly, and in their hearts otherwiſe affected, and to *Propheſie* that they will,
when

when they have an opportunity, introduce some bad Doctrines or Practices, contrary to what they now Profess, is most highly contrary to Christian Charity, is an Usurping the place and prerogative of God, in judging of Mens thoughts; nay more, it is a condemning men beforehand, for what they will do, or at least for what others think they will afterwards: which surely is the most severe and unjust way of proceeding in the World.

Let us then be constant and persevering in the Profession of Religion, and the Doctrines taught in This Church, and in the exercise of Devotions used and encouraged in it. This is the way, by the blessing and assistance of God, to keep our selves from falling into any evil Opinion and Practice; whilst we continue in it we are sure we are in God's way, and so may hope for his blessing. On a strict

survey of the State of Religion in the World, I am sure I can find no particular Church, or number of Christians, but may have more said against it, than can be said against the Church of *England*. We give to the Word of God its supream and Infallible Authority and Preeminence, and we give also to the Commands, and to the Institutions, and Practices of good and holy Men their weight, and respect, and deference also. In the Worship and Service of God, we keep the mean between Superstition or distracting gaudiness, and too great indecency and slovenliness; between burdensomness and multitude of Ceremonies, and a want of becoming carriage and reverence before God. All things that are necessary or useful, we find here enjoined, taught and practised, and this without the mixture of any thing that is dangerous and hurtful.

hurtful. We are confident and
sure of our own being in the
right, but yet dare not condemn
absolutely all that differ from us,
as Reprobates; which though it
is no excuse or security for them
that are in a bad way, yet is a
sign of our Charitable Christian
temper. We received our Reli-
gion at first, as pure as any other
Church, at length we found we
had varied from the Truth, and
then we reformed our selves, as
to *Authority*, as regularly as could
be; nothing being done among
us by multitude or with tumult,
but by the Supream Authority of
our Governours in Church and
State, the King, Parliament and
Convocation. And the *rule and*
method by which we went and
guided our selves in our Refor-
mation, was as good as was pos-
sible, Scripture the Word of God
exactly and nicely examined, and
especially as it is expounded by
the

the Primitive Church :: and nothing was done, or left undone, but what was agreeable to both. And we still desire to be tried and judged by the Scripture, so Interpreted by the Ancients. For if we in any thing now differ from the Ancients, it is only in such small things as they did differ in from one another, without breach of unity, or in such things as it is in the power of every National Church to appoint or alter, in reference to its own particular cases, and circumstances. And so very well assured am I of this, that all I would desire of the Enemies of our Church, is, that they would read the Ancient Fathers, or first Christian Writers, especially in the first Ages of Persecution, and then desire them to judge according to the Rules by which the ancient Church proceeded, whether they do not in their Conscience think, that those good and Holy

Men,

Men, if they had lived now, would have maintained Communion with us, and rejected Communion with them, and I dare be bound to stand to their own Verdict and Judgment. And as this is a matter of great comfort and satisfaction to us, so methinks to others, it must be but a melancholy reflection for them to find themselves such a kind of Christians as never were, nor would have been born within the World before. And as we were thus by good *Authority*, and by a *good Rule* modell'd at first, so I thank God I think I can truly say, that we have in a good measure carried our selves answerably to our excellent Religion. Perhaps History cannot give us an instance of so many Men acting so honestly, prudently and uniformly, against all Enemies on every side, and in the most difficult Cases, as the Members of our Church have done in this late conjuncture;
they

they have had no consideration of their own Interest or safety in comparison of their duty. When our Clergy oppose *Rome*, we are sure they do it purely for Conscience, for it would be vastly more for their Temporal Interest, Power and Authority, to bring in Popery. Whatever discouragements they have found, they still Preach up, and perswade Loyalty to the *King*; and by the Doctrine of Passive Obedience to Temporal Authority, keep People from Rebellion, notwithstanding they have so often been jeered and abused with it: but yet out of modesty, seldom insist on the obedience that is due to *the Church* and Ecclesiastical Authority, tho' there is as much obedience due to her, as even to the Church of *Rome* from her Members. And we may be sure that God will vindicate, and require it as much, as if it were more imperiously insisted

in the Church of England. 197

sisted on. For Duty is not the less, but the more due, the greater the mildness, the forbearance, and the kindness is of them, to whom it ought to be pay'd. As Saint *Paul* deserved never the less respect and observance, though he did not use his Authority, nor take so much on him, as he might have done, as an Apostle of Christ; so a truly Christian and Apostolical Carriage, and Conduct in all these respects, cannot go without a most signal blessing.

And how possible soever it is for Salvation to be had in other ways, yet we are much surer and safer here, than we can be in departing from it. This is the way that God expects we should walk in, he having not only in his abundant Mercy placed us here, but also by all kind of Arguments recommended it to our Reason and Judgment. How unpardonable therefore

fore must it be to leave this Church, how unjust to betray it, and not to maintain it, by all the lawful means that we are able, how accountable to God and Man shall he be, that occasions, contrives, or yields to the ruine of it!

But by persevering constantly in the Doctrines taught, and the Devotions practised in this Church, we shall please God, adorn our Religion, establish the Church, and get a great and lasting Blessing to our selves, *which God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

F I N I S.